



(Kneeling)

(Facing)

The R<sup>o</sup> Reverend Father in GOD,  
FRANCIS Lord Bishop of ROCHESTER  
and DEAN of WESTMINSTER.

(1711 1712)

S E R M O N S  
A N D  
DISCOURSES  
O N S E V E R A L  
S U B J E C T S  
A N D  
O C C A S I O N S.

B Y  
*FRANCIS ATTERBURY, D.D.*  
late Lord Bishop of ROCHESTER,  
and Dean of WESTMINSTER.

VOL. I.

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T O T H E

Right Reverend Father in God,

J O N A T H A N,

By Divine Permission,

Lord Bishop of *Winchester*,

A N D

Prelate of the Most Noble  
Order of the GARTER.

*May it please Your Lordship,*

**T**O accept this Publick  
Testimony of Gra-  
titude from a Man  
who stands indebted to Your  
LORDSHIP for many Fa-  
vours great in themselves, but

A 2                      made



*The Dedication.*

made much greater by Your free and generous Manner of conferring them. For they were not the Effects of Importunity, or the just Rewards of Domestick Service; they sprang not from Dependence, or Acquaintance; being bestow'd on One, who was (at the first) little known to your Lordship, otherwise than by his honest Endeavours to retrieve those *Synodical Rights* of the Clergy, whereof YOU, my LORD, have been all along, to your great Honour, the avow'd Patron and Defender.

I mention not this Instance

### *The Dedication.*

stance of Your LORDSHIP's Goodness to Me, with any View of distinguishing myself from Others: For You have done nothing in My Case, but what You have frequently practis'd since the Time that Divine Providence, for the Good of this Church, rais'd You to the Episcopal Dignity; Nothing, but what hath been successively acknowledg'd by all Those who have prefix'd your Right Reverend Name to their Labours, from the Learned and Venerable Dr. *Pocock*, down to the mean Author of the following Sermons.

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### *The Dedication.*

mons. And, while Your LORDSHIP continues to repeat the same Acts of Generosity, You must be contented to receive the very same Acknowledgments ; since We, who share the Obligations, can scarce find a better Way of expressing our Thanks and doing Justice to Your Character, than by informing the World, Why, and How they were deriv'd to us.

The Secrecy, with which Wise Statesmen conduct their Designs for the Publick Good, so as that the Execution alone shall make the  
Dis-

*The Dedication.*

Discovery, hath by Your LORDSHIP been as carefully observ'd in Your Private Schemes of Beneficence; which have seldom appear'd till they took Effect, and surpriz'd even Those, who were most nearly interested in the Success of them. By this means, You have, after the best manner, forbidden all Applications, by rendering them, not only unnecessary, but impracticable; and have enjoy'd to the utmost both the Honour, and the Pleasure of well-doing.

Indeed, there is scarce any Virtue, which either dis-

### *The Dedication.*

poses the Mind to deserve well of Others, or adds Comeliness and Grace to deserving Actions, that doth not manifestly appear and shine in Your LORDSHIP : And by these Recommending Circumstances, You engage the very Hearts of those You Oblige, and double the Value of every Kindness You do to them.

To give, *hoping* (and looking) *for nothing again*, is the Gospel-Rule of Beneficence ; and Your LORDSHIP hath strictly observ'd it. For none of your Gifts have been clogg'd with Conditions ;

### *The Dedication.*

ditions; You have expected no Returns, but what every one, who hath a thankful Mind, and a just Sense of his Duty, would even choose and delight to pay: You have aim'd only at doing as became You in Your high Station; and when Those, whom You advanc'd, did likewise as became them in *Their* Stations, your Desires were answer'd, and You had your Reward.

It is well known, with what Courtesy and Ease You have always treated Those, whom You have once oblig'd; on that very  
Account

### *The Dedication.*

Account they were sure of having a nearer and freer Access to Your LORDSHIP, instead of being kept to the Usual Terms of Distance and Dependence. You have been so far from ever putting any Man in Mind of what You have done for him, that You would never bear to be put in mind of it Yourself; and have not been more careful to prevent Solicitations, than to avoid Acknowledgments. You had the Thanks of Your Own Conscience, and You neither needed, nor desir'd any other.

It

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It is the peculiar Happiness of those Persons, on whom Your Favours are plac'd; that they receive them from an Hand eminent for its great and lasting Services to our Church and Constitution. For there are, I think, no Enemies whatsoever, either of her Doctrine, Discipline, or Worship, (either within Doors, or without) but what Your LORDSHIP hath, in the Course of your Episcopal Government, withstood, and baffled.

You were one of those *Seven Prelates*, (worthy of honour-



### *The Dedication.*

honourable Remembrance) who gave the most Effectual Check to the Attempts of *Popery* in a late Reign, and preserv'd the pure Profession of Christianity among us by the same Suffering Methods, by which it was at first propagated. It can never be forgotten, with what a true Christian Spirit (such as animated the chief Pastors of the Church, in those Days, when Episcopacy was a certain Step to Martyrdom) You stood forth, and offer'd yourself willingly to *witness a good Confession*; how Solicitous You  
were

### *The Dedication.*

were, lest the *Tower-Gates* should have been shut upon those Excellent Persons, ere Your Distance would permit You to accompany them in their glorious Confinement; to partake of which, You made as much Haste, as some Men afterwards did, to draw the Advantages of it to themselves, under a new Turn of Affairs.

When that happen'd, New Occasions also of serving the Church, offer'd themselves to Your Lordship, which You as readily embrac'd. The Fatherly Vigilance, and Exemplary Firmness

### *The Dedication.*

ness you then shew'd in frustrating the Methods made Use of to perpetuate *Schism*, by unauthoriz'd *Schools* and *Seminaries*, were observ'd with Pleasure, and own'd with Thanks by All that wish'd well to our Establishment. Nor could they, who wish'd ill to it, justly blame an Endeavour of securing to the *Ordinary* that Power, which he always enjoy'd, and of which he is not yet divested; and of confining a Legal Indulgence within the Bounds prescrib'd by that Law, which gave Birth to it.

Shall

### *The Dedication.*

Shall I take notice here, of the Seasonable and Liberal Encouragements You reach'd out to a Worthy *Presbyter* of this Church, who repress'd the bold Attempts of *Seſtaries* by his Learned and Accurate Writings? It may, I think, become me to mention even this particular Act of Your Bounty, ſince it had a General Aim and Influence, and was not terminated in the *Perſon*, how deſerving ſoever, but in the Righteous *Cauſe* which he eſpous'd; and which, as Your LORDSHIP'S fix'd Judgment leads  
You

### *The Dedication.*

You, by all Lawful Means to support, so your Temper inclines You rather to promote by Rewards than Punishments.

The Fears of Popery were scarce remov'd, when *Heresy* began to diffuse its Venom; and the sacred Mysteries of our Faith were, after a daring and petulant manner, expos'd to publick Scorn, even in one of those famous *Seats of Knowledge*, which then were, and still are, the chief Bulwarks of true Religion. It pleas'd God, that You were now possess'd of a *See*, which gave  
You

### *The Dedication.*

You Power to Visit and Correct such Enormities ; and You exerted that Power with Zeal and Vigour ; driving out from the Schools of Learning a Disciple of *Arrius*, who had all the Craft and Obstinacy of his Master, and the good Luck, for some time, to be as well Supported. The Prosecution of this Cause was attended with so many Difficulties, as would have shaken a Resolution less firm than Your LORDSHIP'S. But the Discharge of Your great Trust, and the Maintenance

### *The Dedication.*

ance of God's Truth, were the Springs which had set You on work ; and They who act upon such Principles, can never be discourag'd.

The Issue of that memorable Struggle, as it was of great Advantage to the Church, and the Universities, in Other Respects, so particularly in This, that it fix'd the Power of *Visitors* (not till then acknowledg'd Final) upon the sure Foundation of a *Judgment in Parliament* ; and, by that means, made so effectual

### *The Dedication.*

effectual a Provision for the future Quiet of those Learned Bodies, as may be reckon'd equal to the greatest Benefactions.

This, and another Parliamentary Decision, which Your LORDSHIP, not long after, with equal Difficulty, obtain'd; and by which the *Bishop's* sole Right to judge of the *Qualifications* of *Persons* applying for *Institution*, was unalterably confirm'd; are such Instances of Your Magnanimity, and Publick Spirit, as will remain in Memory, while the

a 2      Church



### *The Dedication.*

Church or the Law of *England* lasts. For they were not Temporary Services, to be made use of, and talk'd of for a while, and then forgotten ; but (as the Historian truly said of his own Writings) *Perpetual Acquisitions*, laid up for the Benefit of succeeding Ages. And He who contends for Common Rights, with Lower Aims than these, means not the Constitution, but Himself ; and deserves not the Applause even of his Own Times, when he is not disinterested enough to look beyond them.

It

### *The Dedication.*

It was the Sense of these Important Services, already done by Your LORDSHIP, that occasion'd a general Joy among good Men, when they heard of Your intended Translation to the See of *Winchester*. Particularly, the Clergy of that Diocese, and the University of *Oxford*, who were chiefly concern'd in the Consequences of Your Promotion, receiv'd the first Accounts of it with the greatest Satisfaction, and were in Pain, while the Event was suspended --- A Suspence which we may presume design'd to

### *The Dedication.*

do Honour to Your LORDSHIP, and to justify the Wisdom of Her Majesty's Choice; since it tended to shew how impatiently You were expected, and desir'd, by Those who were to be under Your Inspection and Authority.

Among all the Learned Bodies, whose Hopes and Fears were then in greatest Agitation, None was more (or with more Reason) solicitous than that *House*, which had the Honour of Educating Your LORDSHIP, and instilling into Your Mind  
those

### *The Dedication.*

those Principles, which whoever hath once imbib'd, seldom forsakes; and whosoever forsakes not, must immoveably adhere to the true Interests of the Church, and Monarchy. Whilst that fruitful Parent thus trains up her Children, She is secure of Protection and Favour from Your LORDSHIP, or from Whoever else He be, that hath not been withheld from doing Good to her, in Evil Days, by malicious and groundless Clamours. Under Your and Their Shadow She hath *rested at Noon*, when the Heat

### *The Dedication.*

was most intense and scorching : She hath flourish'd hitherto, and will, I doubt not, still continue to flourish, tho' Her Enemies be Many and Mighty, and daily *shoot out their Arrows against her, even bitter Words.* She looks upon your LORDSHIP'S Advancement, as a sure Token, that Divine Providence is still propitious to Her ; and, encourag'd by this Prospect, She is ready to take up her Parable, and say : *Joseph is a fruitful Bough, even a fruitful Bough by a Well, whose Branches run over*

### *The Dedication.*

*over the Wall. The Archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his Bow abode in Strength, and the Arms of his Hands were made strong by the Hands of the mighty God of Jacob: from thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel.*

In the Names of These, and of all Other the true Friends and Sons of the Church, permit me, MY LORD, to congratulate Your Accession to a See, which will afford You such a Sphere of Action as You were made to fill; which will furnish  
You

### *The Dedication.*

You with many welcome Opportunities of doing Good, of rewarding Merit of cherishing Piety and Virtue, of encouraging Persons, distinguish'd by their Learning, their undaunted Assertion of Divine Truths, and undissembled Zeal for our admirable Constitution in Church and State ; which will, in short, enable You to carry on all those Excellent Designs, to which Your Upright and Bountiful Heart is religiously inclin'd.

What may We not promise ourselves from the Influence of your LORDSHIP'S  
Conduct

*The Dedication.*

Conduct in so Eminent a Station? from Your known Courage and Fervency in the Cause of God, and his Church? from the Greatness of Your Mind, the Goodness of Your Intentions, and the Soundness of Your Principles? from that Habitual Love of *Worthy Deeds*, which You contracted so early, and have by long Practice confirm'd? and from your Experience of the Success that hath attended You in all You have suffer'd, or done for the Publick?

By Your LORDSHIP's  
Means,



### *The Dedication.*

Means, and within the Circle of your Power, we doubt not but to see all proper Steps taken towards reviving decay'd Discipline; and restoring Church-Censures to their due Force and Credit; towards detecting and defeating Clandestine Simoniackal Contracts; towards securing the Rights and Revenues of the Clergy from Encroachments, rescuing their Persons and sacred Function from Contempt, and freeing Religion itself from the Insults now made upon it by Blasphemous Tongues, and Pens, with equal Boldness and Impunity.       These

### *The Dedication.*

These, MY LORD, are the Expectations with which the best Men are now entertaining themselves, and which You are hastening to make good. The Actions of the past Years of Your Life are a sure Earnest and Pledge of what those to come will produce ; and the bright Example You have set long ago to Yourself and to Others, shall grow brighter in Proportion to Your Power and Opportunities: for *the Path of the Just is as the Shining Light, that shineth more and more unto a perfect Day.*

The

### *The Dedication.*

The great Honours and Revenues, still annex'd to some few Stations in the Church, are the chief Mark which Impiety, Envy, and Sacrilege aim at ; and much they have to say, why Religion should be stripp'd of these superfluous and unprofitable Ornaments. But Malice itself is disarm'd, and all Objections are silenc'd, when those Rewards are bestow'd on Men, who, by their Birth, and Virtues, and Experience, are every way qualify'd for them ; whose Hereditary Fortunes, and  
Noble

*The Dedication.*

Noble Natures, set them above all mean Designs of diverting the Patrimony of the Church to improper Uses; and who are ready therefore to reflect back upon Religion the Advantages they derive from thence, and to abound in all the Offices of Hospitality and Charity, in proportion to what they enjoy. I need not say, how far these Excellent Qualities belong to Your LORDSHIP, and are a confess'd Part of your Character.

When we compare the  
Good which You have done,  
My

### *The Dedication.*

MY LORD, with that which You have receiv'd, it brings to mind the Apposite Passage of the Prophet: *The Liberal deviseth Liberal Things, and by Liberal Things shall he be establisht*. Your LORDSHIP is an Illustrious Instance of this Truth; for the Blessings You have so plentifully scatter'd on those beneath You, have been multiply'd on Your own Head from above; and You have reap'd the Benefits of a most generous and firm Friendship, in like Manner as You sow'd them. *You have given, MY LORD, and it hath*

### *The Dedication.*

*hath been given unto You ;  
good Measure, pressed down,  
shaken together, and run-  
ning over : for with the same  
Measure, which You meted  
withal, hath it been (and  
may it ever be) measured to  
you again.*

Your Happiness, MY  
LORD, is now as compleat  
as all the Prosperous Cir-  
cumstances of Life can make  
it; and your Private Dome-  
stic Felicities (a Case rarely  
known) are no ways inferior  
to those of a more Publick  
and Splendid Nature. For  
You are happy in the best  
of *Ladies*, as She is in the

b      Tender-

*The Dedication.*

Tenderest of Husbands; You have the best of *Brothers*, and the best of *Children*; those *Arrows in the Hand of the Mighty Man*, which are both his Ornament and Defence: God be thanked your *Quiver is full of them!* And *He* amongst them, who is to inherit Your Ample Fortunes, doth, by his Early Love of Learning, and most Virtuous Disposition, promise, that he will one day do Honour even to that Honourable Stock from which he springs.

With such a Variety of Blessings hath God surrounded  
ed

### *The Dedication.*

ed You ! and, that nothing may be wanting, he hath blefs'd You likewise with a Heart and Skill to use them. May You, thro' his Goodness, enjoy an uninterrupted Continuance of them ; and such a Length of Days, as will give You Room to improve them to the utmost, for His Glory and the Publick Benefit.

This, MY LORD, is the Unanimous Wish of all that have been oblig'd by You, of all that Honour You ; that is, of all that truly Know You ; but of none more than Him, who now offers these



*The Dedication.*

**Sermons to YOUR LORDSHIP,**  
and, with that Sincerity  
which becomes a Preacher of  
Divine Truth, professes him-  
self to be, by all the Tyes  
of Esteem and Duty, Grati-  
tude and Inclination,

YOUR LORDSHIP'S

*Most Devoted, and*

*Ever Faithful Servant,*

**FR. ATTERBURY.**

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*The Duty of Praise and Thanksgiving.*

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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

Q U E E N,

A T

*W H I T E - H A L L,*

*M A Y 29, 1692.*

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P S A L M L. 14.

*Offer unto God Thanksgiving.*


**A**MONG the many Excellen- SERM.  
cies of this pious Collection of I.  
Hymns, for which so particu-  
lar a Value hath been set upon it by the  
Church of God in all Ages, this is not  
the

SERMON. the least, that the true Price of Duties is

1. there justly stated; Men are call'd off  
 from resting in the outward Shew of Religion, in Ceremonies and Ritual Observances; and taught rather to practise (that which was shadowed out by these Rites, and to which they are design'd to lead) sound inward Virtue and Piety.

The several Composers of these Hymns were *Prophets*; Persons, whose Business it was, not only to foretel Events, for the Benefit of the Church in succeeding Times, but to correct and reform also what was amiss in that Race of Men, with whom they liv'd and convers'd; to preserve a foolish People from Idolatry, and false Worship; to rescue the Law from corrupt Glosses, and superstitious Abuses; and to put Men in mind of (what they were so willing to forget) that Eternal and Invariable Rule, which was before these *Positive* Duties, would continue after them, and was to be observed, even Then, in preference to them.

The

The Discharge, I say, of this part of S E R M.  
the Prophetick Office taking up so much 1.  
room in the Book of *Psalms*; this hath   
been one Reason, among many others,  
why they have been always so highly  
esteem'd; because we are from hence  
furnished with a proper Reply to an Ar-  
gument commonly made use of by Un-  
believers; who look upon all reveal'd  
Religions, as Pious Frauds, and Impos-  
tures, on the Account of the Prejudices  
they have entertain'd in relation to That  
of the *Jews*: The whole of which they  
first suppose to lie in External Perfor-  
mances, and then easily persuade them-  
selves, that God could never be the Au-  
thor of such a mere Piece of Pageantry,  
and empty Formality, nor delight in a  
Worship which consisted purely in a  
Number of odd unaccountable Ceremo-  
nies. Which Objection of theirs we  
should not be able thoroughly to answer,  
unless we could prove (chiefly out of the  
*Psalms*, and other Parts of the Prophe-  
tick Writings) that the Jewish Religion  
was somewhat more than bare Outside  
and



SERMON. and Shew; and that Inward Purity, and

I. the Devotion of the Heart was a Duty

Then, as well as Now. One great Instance of this Proof we have in the Words now before us; which are taken from a Psalm of *Asaph*, written on purpose to set out the Weakness and Worthlessness of External Performances, when compared with more Substantial and Vital Duties. To enforce which Doctrine, God himself is brought in, as delivering it. *Hear, O my People, and I will speak, O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God.* The Preface is very solemn; and therefore what it ushers in, we may be sure, is of no common Importance: *I will not reprove thee for thy Sacrifices, or thy Burnt-Offerings, to have been continually before me.* That is, I will not so reprove thee for any Failures in thy Sacrifices and Burnt-Offerings, as if These were the Only, or the Chief Things I required of thee. *I will take no Bullock out of thy House, nor He-goat out of thy Folds.* I prescribed not Sacrifices to thee, for my own sake, because


because I needed them: *For every Beast of the Forest is mine, and the Cattle upon a thousand Hills.* Mine they are, and

S E R M.  
I.  


were, before ever I commanded thee to offer them to Me; so that (as it follows) *If I were hungry, yet would I not tell thee; for the World is Mine, and the Fulness thereof.* But can ye be so gross and senseless, as to think me liable to Hunger and Thirst? as to imagine that Wants of that kind can touch me? *Will I eat the Flesh of Bulls, or drink the Blood of Goats?* — Thus doth he expostulate severely with them, after the most graceful manner of the Eastern Poetry. The Issue of which is, a plain and full Resolution of the Case, in those few Words of the Text. — *Offer unto God Thanksgiving.* Would you do your Homage the most agreeable Way? would you render the most acceptable of Services? *Offer unto God Thanksgiving.*

The Use I intend to make of these Words, is, from hence to raise some Thoughts about that very excellent and important Duty of Praise and Thanksgiving;

S E R M. giving : A Subject, not unfit to be dis-

1.  cours'd of, at this Time; whether we consider, either the more than ordinary Coldness that appears of late in Mens Tempers towards the Practice of this (or any other) Part of a warm and affecting Devotion; the Great Occasion of setting aside this particular Day in the Calendar, some Years ago; or the New Instances of Mercy and Goodness, which God hath lately been pleas'd to bestow upon us: answering at last the many *Prayers* and *Fastings*, by which we have besought him so long for the Establishment of their Majesties Throne, and for the Success of their Arms; and giving us, in his own good Time, an Opportunity of appearing before him in the more delightful Part of our Duty, *with the Voice of Joy and Praise, with a Multitude that keep Holy-days.*

Psal. xlii.

4.

*Offer unto God Thanksgiving* --- Which that we may do, let us enquire first, how we are to *Understand* this Command of Offering Praise and Thanksgiving unto God;

*Praise and thanksgiving*

7

God ; and then how *Reasonable* it is that we should comply with it. SERM.

I.


Our Enquiry into what is *meant* here, will be very short : For who is there, that understands any thing of Religion but knows, that the offering Praise and Thanks to God implies, our having a lively and devout Sense of his Excellencies, and of his Benefits ; our recollecting them with Humility and Thankfulness of heart ; and our expressing these inward Affections by suitable outward Signs ; by reverent and lowly Postures of Body, by Songs, and Hymns, and Spiritual Ejaculations ; either Privately, or Publickly ; either in the Customary and Daily Service of the Church, or in its more solemn Assemblies, convened upon Extraordinary Occasions ? This is the Account, which every Christian easily gives himself of it ; and which, therefore, it would be needless to enlarge upon. I shall only take notice on this Head, That Praise and Thanksgiving do, in Strictness of Speech, signify things somewhat different. Our

*Praise*

SERM. *Praise* properly terminates in God, on the

I. account of his natural Excellencies and  
 ~~~~~ Perfections; and is that Act of Devotion by which we confess and admire his several Attributes: But *Thanksgiving* is a narrower Duty, and imports only a grateful Sense and Acknowledgment of past Mercies. We praise God for all his glorious Acts, of every kind, that regard either Us, or Other Men; for his very *Vengeance*, and those *Judgments* which he sometimes sends *abroad in the Earth*; But we thank him (properly speaking) for the Instances of his *Goodness* alone; and for such only of these, as We ourselves are some way concern'd in. This, I say, is what the two Words strictly imply: But since the Language of Scripture is generally less exact, and useth Either of them often to express the Other by, I shall not think myself oblig'd, in what follows, thus nicely always to distinguish them.


Now the great *Reasonableness* of this Duty of Praise or Thanksgiving, and our several *Obligations* to it, will appear; if

we either consider it *absolutely* in itself, S E R M.  
as the Debt of our Natures; or *compare* I.  
it with other Duties, and shew the Rank   
it bears among them; or set out, in the  
last place, some of its peculiar *Properties*  
and *Advantages*, with regard to the de-  
vout Performer of it.


I. The Duty of Praise and Thankf-I.  
giving, considered *absolutely* in it self,  
is, I say, the Debt, and Law of our Na-  
ture. We had such Faculties bestowed on  
us by our Creator, as made us capable  
of satisfying this Debt, and obeying this  
Law; and they never, therefore, work  
more naturally and freely, than when  
they are thus employed.

'Tis one of the earliest Instructions  
given us by Philosophy, and which hath  
ever since been approved and inculcated  
by the wisest Men of all Ages, That the  
Original Design of making Man was,  
that he might Praise and Honour Him  
who made him. When God had finished  
this goodly Frame of Things, we call  
*the World*, and put together the several

SERM. Parts of it, according to his infinite Wis-

I.  dom, in exact Number, Weight, and Measure ; there was still wanting a Creature in these lower Regions, that could apprehend the Beauty, Order, and exquisite Contrivance of it ; that from contemplating the Gift, might be able to raise itself up to the great Giver, and do Honour to all his Attributes. Every thing indeed that God made, did, in some Sense, glorify its Author, inasmuch as it carried upon it the plain Mark and Impress of the Deity, and was an Effect worthy of that first Cause from whence it flow'd ; and Thus might the *Heavens* be said, at the first Moment in which they stood forth, *to declare his Glory, and the Firmament to shew his Handiwork* : But this was an imperfect, and defective Glory ; the Sign was of no Signification here below, whilst there was no one here as yet to take Notice of it. Man, therefore, was formed to supply this Want ; endued with Powers fit to find out, and to acknowledge these unlimited Perfections ; and then put into this Temple

*Psal. xix. 1.*

ple of God, this lower World, as the SERM.  
Priest of Nature, to offer up the Incense <sup>1.</sup>  
of Thanks and Praise for the mute and the   
insensible Part of the Creation.

This, I say, hath been the Opinion all along of the most thoughtful Men, down from the most ancient Times: And tho' it be not Demonstrative, yet is it what we cannot but judge highly reasonable, if we do but allow, that Man was made for some End or other, and that he is capable of perceiving that End. For then, let us search and enquire never so much, we shall find no Other Account of him that we can rest upon so well. If we say, That he was made purely for the good Pleasure of God; this is, in effect, to say, that he was made for no Determinate End; or for none, at least, that We can discern. If we say, That he was designed as an Instance of the Wisdom, and Power, and Goodness of God; this indeed may be the Reason of his *Being* in general; . for 'tis the common Reason of the Being of every Thing besides. But it gives no Account, why he was




S E R M. made *such* a Being as he is, a reflecting,

1. thoughtful, inquisitive Being: The particular Reason of this seems most aptly to be drawn from the Praise and Honour that was (not only to redound to God from him, but) to be given to God by him.

This Duty, therefore, is the Debt and Law of our Nature. And it will more distinctly appear to be such, if we consider the two Ruling Faculties of our Mind, the *Understanding* and the *Will*, apart; in both which it is deeply founded: In the Understanding, as in the Principle of Reason, which owns and acknowledges it; in the Will, as in the Fountain of Gratitude and Return, which prompts, and even constrains us to pay it.

*Reason* was given us as a Rule and Measure, by the Help of which we were to proportion our Esteem of every thing, according to the Degrees of Perfection and Goodness which we found therein. It cannot, therefore, if it doth its Office at all, but apprehend God as the best and most perfect Being; it must needs see, and own, and admire his infinite Perfections.

fections. And this is what is strictly S E R M.  
meant by *Praise*; which, therefore, is I.  
expressed in Scripture by *confessing* to God,   
and *acknowledging* him; by *ascribing* to  
him what is his due; and, as far as This  
Sense of the Words reaches, 'tis impossi-  
ble to *think* of God without praising him.  
For it depends not on the Understanding  
how it shall apprehend Things, any more  
than it doth on the Eye, how Visible Ob-  
jects shall appear to it.

The Duty takes the farther and surer  
Hold of us, by the Means of our *Will*,  
and that strong Bent towards *Gratitude*  
which the Author of our Nature hath  
implanted in it. There is not a more  
active Principle than this in the Mind  
of Man; and surely, that which deserves  
its utmost Force, and should set all its  
Springs a-work, is God; the Great and  
Universal Benefactor, from whom alone  
we received whatever we either have,  
or are, and to whom we can possibly re-  
pay nothing but our Praises, or (to speak  
more properly on this Head, and ac-  
cording to the strict Import of the Word)

S E R M. our Thanksgivings. *Who hath first given*

I. *to God, (saith the great Apostle in his usual Figure) and it shall be recompensed unto him again?* A Gift, it seems, always requires a Recompence: Nay, but *of him, and through him, and to him are all things; Of him, as the Author; Thro' him, as the Preserver and Governor; To him, as the End and Perfection of all Things: To whom, therefore, (as it follows) be Glory for ever, Amen!*

Rom vi  
35, 36

Gratitude consists in an equal Return of Benefits, if we are able; or of Thanks, if we are not: Which Thanks, therefore, must rise always in Proportion as the Favours receiv'd are great, and the Receiver incapable of making any other Sort of Requital. Now, since no Man hath benefited God at any Time, and yet every Man, in each Moment of his Life, is continually benefited by him, what strong Obligations must we needs be under to Thank him? 'Tis true, our Thanks are really as insignificant to him, as any other Kind of Return would be; in themselves indeed, they are worthless; but his  
Good-

Goodness hath put a Value upon them: S E R M.


He hath declared, he will accept them in  
 lieu of the vast Debt we owe: and, after  
 that, which is fittest for us, to dispute  
 how they come to be taken as an *Equi-*  
*valent*, or to pay them? I.  
~~~~~

It is, therefore, the Voice of Nature  
 (as far as Gratitude itself is so) that the  
 Good Things we receive from above,  
 should be sent back again thither in  
 Thank, and Praises, *as the Rivers run* Eccles 1 7.  
*into the Sea; to the Place (the Ocean of*  
*Beneficence) from whence the Rivers come,*  
*thither should they return again.*

II. We have considered the Duty II.  
*absolutely*; we are now to *compare* it  
 with others, and to see what Rank it  
 bears among them. And here we shall  
 find, that, among all the Acts of Reli-  
 gion, immediately addressed to God, This  
 is much the Noblest, and most Excellent;  
 as it must needs be, if what hath been laid  
 down be allowed, that the End of Man's  
 Creation was, to praise and glorify God.  
 For That cannot but be the most noble


SERM. and excellent Act of any Being, which

I. best answers the End and Design of it.  
 ~~~~~ Other Parts of Devotion, such as *Confession* and *Prayer*, seem not Originally to have been designed for Man, nor Man for them. They imply *Guilt*, and *Want*, with which the *State of Innocence* was not acquainted. Had Man continued in that Estate, his Worship (like the Devotions of Angels) had been paid to Heaven in pure Acts of Thanksgiving; and nothing had been left for him to do, beyond the enjoying the good Things of Life, as Nature directed, and praising the God of Nature who bestowed them. But being fallen from Innocence, and Abundance; having contracted Guilt, and forfeited his Right to all Sorts of Mercies; Prayer and Confession became necessary for a time, to retrieve the Loss, and restore him to that State, wherein he should be able to live without them. These are fitted, therefore, for a lower Dispensation; before which, in Paradise, there was nothing but Praise, and after which, there shall be nothing but that,  
 in

in Heaven. Our perfect State did at first, SERM.  
and will at last consist in the Performance I.  
of this Duty; and herein, therefore, lies   
the Excellence and the Honour of our  
Nature.

'Tis the same way of Reasoning, by  
which the Apostle hath given the Prefe-  
rence to Charity, beyond Faith, and  
Hope, and every Spiritual Gift. *Charity* 1 Cor xiii.  
*never faileth*, saith he; meaning, that it 8.  
is not a Virtue useful only in this Life,  
but will accompany us also into the  
Next: *But whether there be Prophecies,*  
*they shall fail; whether there be Tongues,*  
*they shall cease; whether there be Know-*  
*ledge, it shall vanish away:* These are Gifts  
of a Temporary Advantage, and shall all  
perish in the using. *For we know in part,* Ver. 9.  
*and we prophesy in part:* Our present State  
is imperfect; and, therefore, what belongs  
to That, and only That, must be imper-  
fect too. *But when that which is Perfect* Ver. 10.  
*is come, then that which is in Part shall*  
*be done away.* The Argument of St. Paul,  
we see, which sets Charity above the  
rest of Christian Graces, will give Praise  
also

SERM. also the Pre-eminence over all the Parts

I.  of Christian Worship; and we may conclude Our reasoning, therefore, as He doth his: *And now abideth Confession, Prayer, and Praise, these three; but the greatest of these is Praise.*


It is so, certainly, on other Accounts, as well as this; particularly, as it is the most *disinterested* Branch of our Religious Service; such as hath the most of God, and the least of our Selves in it, of any we pay; and therefore approaches the nearest of any to a pure, and free, and perfect Act of Homage. For though a good Action doth not grow immediately worthless by being done with the Prospect of Advantage, as some have strangely imagin'd; yet it will be allow'd, I suppose, that its being done without the Mixture of that End, or with as little of it as is possible, recommends it so much the more, and raises the Price of it. *Doth* Job 1. 9. *Job fear God for nought?* was an Objection of Satan; which implied, that those Duties were most valuable, where our own Interest was least aim'd at: And  
God

God seems, by the Commission he then S E R M.  
gave Satan to try Experiments upon *Job*,  
thus far to have allow'd his Plea. Now I.  
our Requests for future, and even our  
Acknowledgments of past Mercies, center  
purely in our selves, our own Interest is  
the direct Aim of them. But Praise is  
a generous and unmercenary Principle,  
which proposes no other End to itself,  
but to do, as is fit for a Creature endow'd with such Faculties to do, towards the most perfect and beneficent of Beings; and to pay the willing Tribute of Honour there, where the Voice of Reason directs us to pay it. God hath indeed annex'd a Blessing to the Duty, and when we know this, we cannot chuse, while we are performing the Duty, but have some Regard to the Blessing which belongs to it. However, that is not the direct Aim of our Devotions, nor was it the first Motive that stirr'd us up to them. Had it been so, we should naturally have betaken our selves to Prayer, and breath'd out our Desires in That Form wherein they are most properly convey'd.

In



SERMON. In short, Praise is our most excel-

I.  lent Work, a Work common to the Church Triumphant and Militant, and which lifts us up into a Communion and Fellowship with Angels. The Matter, about which it is conversant, is always the Perfections of God's Nature; and the Act itself is the Perfection of Ours.


III. I come now, in the last Place, to set out some of its peculiar *Properties and Advantages*, which recommend it to the Devout Performer. And,

1<sup>st</sup>, It is the most *pleasing* Part of our Devotions. It proceeds always from a Lively, Chearful Temper of Mind; and it cherishes and improves what it proceeds from. *For it is good to sing Praises unto our God*, (says one, whose Experience, in this Case, we may rely upon) *for it is pleasant, and Praise is comely*. Petition and Confession are the Language of the Indigent and the Guilty, the Breathings of a sad and a contrite Spirit: *Is any afflicted? Let him pray: But,*


Ps. cxlviii.

4


Jam. v. 23.

is any merry? Let him sing *Psalms*. The SER-M.  
most usual and natural way of Mens 1.  
expressing the Mirth of their Hearts,   
is, in a Song; and Songs are the very  
Language of Praise; to the expressing  
of which they are in a peculiar man-  
ner appropriated, and are scarce of any  
other Use in Religion. Indeed, the whole  
Composition of this Duty is such, as  
throughout speaks Ease and Delight to  
the Mind: It proceeds from *Love*, and  
from *Thankfulness*; from *Love*, the Foun-  
tain of Pleasure, the Passion, which gives  
every Thing we do, or enjoy, its Relish  
and Agreeableness. From *Thankfulness*,  
which involves in it the Memory of  
past Benefits; the actual Presence of  
them to the Mind, and the repeated En-  
joyment of them. And as its *Principle*  
is, such is its *End* also. For it procur-  
eth Quiet and Ease to the Mind, by do-  
ing somewhat towards satisfying that  
Debt which it labours under; by deli-  
vering it of those Thoughts of Praise and  
Gratitude, those Exultations it is so full  
of; and which would grow uneasy and  
trouble-

SERM. troublesome to it, if they were kept in.

1. If the Thankful *refrained*, it would be  
 *Pain and Grief to them*: But then, then  
 Pf. lxiii. 5 *is their Soul satisfied as with Marrow*  
*and Fatness, when their Mouth praiseth*  
*God with Joyful Lips.*

2. It is another distinguishing Property of Divine Praise, that it enlargeth the Powers and Capacities of our Souls; turning them from little and low Things, upon their Greatest and Noblest Objects, the Divine Nature; and employing them in the Discovery and Admiration of those several Perfections that adorn it. We see, what Difference there is between Man and Man; such, as there is hardly greater between Man and Beast: And this proceeds chiefly from the different Sphere of Thought which they act in, and the different Objects they converse with. The Mind is essentially the same in the Peasant and the Prince; the Forces of it naturally equal in the untaught Man, and the Philosopher: Only the One of these is busied in mean Affairs, and within narrower

lower Bounds, the Other exercises him-S E R M. self in things of Weight and Moment; I. and This it is that puts the wide Distance  between them. Noble Objects are to the Mind, what the Sun-Beams are to a Bud or Flower: They open and unfold, as it were, the Leaves of it; put it upon exerting and spreading it self every way; and call forth all those Powers, that lie hid and lock'd up in it. The Praise and Admiration of God, therefore, brings this Advantage along with it, that it sets our Faculties upon their full Stretch, and improves them to all the Degrees of Perfection, of which they are capable.


3. It, farther, promotes in us an exquisite Sense of God's Honour, and an high Indignation of Mind at every thing that openly profanes it. For what we value and delight in, we cannot with Patience hear slighted, or abused. Our Own Praises, which we are constantly putting up, will be a *Spur* to us toward procuring and promoting the Divine Glory in every Other Instance; and will

SER.M. make us set our Faces against all open

I. and avowed Impieties. Which, methinks, should be considered a little by such as would be thought not to be wanting in this Duty, and yet are often silent under the foulest Dishonours done to Religion, and its great Author. For tamely to hear God's Name and Worship vilified by Others, is no very good Argument, that we have been us'd to Honour and Reverence him in good earnest, Ourselves.

4. It will, beyond all this, work in us a deep Humility, and Consciousness of our own Imperfections. Upon a frequent Attention to God and his Attributes, we shall easily discover our own Weakness and Emptiness; Our swelling Thoughts of ourselves will abate, and we shall see and feel, that we are altogether lighter to be laid in the Balance, than Vanity. And this is a Lesson, which, to the greatest Part of Mankind, is, I think, very well worth learning. We are naturally Presumptuous and Vain; full of Ourselves, and regardless of


Psal lxi.

of every thing besides : Especially, when S E R M.  
 some little Outward Privileges distinguish I.  
 Us from the rest of Mankind ; then, 'tis   
 odds, but we look into Ourselves with  
 great degrees of Complacency ; and are  
*wiser* (and better every way) *in our* Prov.xxvi.  
*own Conceit, than seven Men, that can* <sup>16.</sup>  
*render a Reason.* Now nothing will  
 contribute so much to the Cure of  
 this Vanity, as a due Attention to  
 God's Excellencies, and Perfections : By  
 comparing These with Those which, we  
 imagine, belong to us, we shall learn,  
*not to think of ourselves more highly* Rom xii.  
*than we ought to think of ourselves,* <sup>3.</sup>  
*but to think soberly :* We shall find more  
 Satisfaction in looking upwards, and  
 humbling ourselves before our com-  
 mon Creator, than in casting our Eyes  
 downwards with Scorn upon our Fel-  
 low Creatures, and setting at nought  
 any Part of the Work of his Hands.  
 The vast Distance we are at from  
 Real and Infinite Worth will astonish  
 us so much, that we shall not be  
 tempted to value Ourselves upon those

SERM. lesser Degrees of Pre-eminence, which

1. Custom, or Opinion, or some little accidental Advantages have given Us over other Men.

5. I shall mention but one Use of it more, and 'tis This; That a conscientious Praise of God will keep Us back from all false and mean Praises, all fulsome and servile Flatteries, such as are in Use among Men. Praising, as 'tis commonly managed, is nothing else but a Trial of Skill upon a Man, how many good Things we can possibly say of him. All the Treasuries of Oratory are ransack'd, all the fine things that ever were said, are heap'd together, for his sake; and no matter, whether it belongs to him, or not; so there be but enough on't. Which is one deplorable Instance, among a thousand, of the Baseness of human Nature, its small Regard to Truth and Justice; to Right, or Wrong; to what is, or is not to be praised. But he, who hath a deep Sense of the Excellencies of God upon his Heart, will make a God of nothing besides.

besides. He will give every One his S E R M.  
just Encomium, Honour where Honour I.  
is due, and as much as is due; because   
it is his Duty to do so: But the Honour of God will suffer him to go no farther. Which Rule, if it had been observed, a Neighbouring Prince, (who now, God be thanked, needs Flattery somewhat more than ever he did) would have wanted a great deal of that Incense which hath been offered up to him by his Adorers.

Upon these Grounds doth the Duty of Praise stand, and these are the Obligations that bind us to the Performance of it. 'Tis the End of our Being, and the very Rule and Law of Our Nature; flowing from the Two great Fountains of human Action, the Understanding and the Will, naturally, and almost necessarily. It is the most Excellent Part of our Religious Worship; enduring to Eternity, after the rest shall be *done away*; and paid even Now, in the frankest Manner, with the least Regard to our own Interest. It recom-




SERM. mends itself to us by several peculiar

I. Properties, and Advantages; as it carries more Pleasure in it, than all other Kinds of Devotion; as it enlarges and exalts the several Powers of the Mind; as it breeds in us an exquisite Sense of God's Honour, and a Willingness to promote it in the World; as it teaches us to be Humble and Lowly Ourselves; and yet preserves us from base and sordid Flattery, from bestowing mean and undue Praises upon Others.

IV. I shall now shut up the arguing Part of this Discourse, with a short Application to Two Sorts of Persons; the *Careless*, and the *Profane*; One of which Neglects the Practice of so Important a Duty, the Other lives in an open Defiance of it.

A *Neglect* in this Case, doth certainly involve in it a very high Degree of Guilt and Folly: For 'tis (we see) the Neglect of our Duty, and Honour, our Interest, and our Pleasure, all at once. 'Tis to omit doing that, which we were purposely


posely sent into the World to do ; and S E R M.  
without doing which, all the other Af- I.  
fairs of Life are but one continued Imper-   
tinence : That, which we have so many  
Obligations to do, and no Excuse for leav-  
ing undone ; since Praise is within every  
Man's Reach ; there is no one but hath  
it in his Power to be thankful.

God commanded the *Jews* to acknow-  
ledge his Sovereignty and Beneficence, by  
Sacrifices ; a Costly and a Troublesome  
Way of Worship. Of Us he requires only  
the Cheap and Easy offering of Our  
Thanks and Praises, --- and shall we not  
pay it ? Alas ! We do not ! Every thing  
proves an Hindrance to us in the Way  
to this our bounden Duty and Service :  
We are too idle, or too busy to attend  
upon it. And even when we find Leisure  
enough ; yet how cold and how insen-  
sible are we, whilst 'tis going forward ! *We* Mat. xv. 8.  
*draw nigh unto him with our Mouths, and*  
*honour him with our Lips* (perhaps) ;  
*but our Hearts are far from him.* And  
do we then know, what it is to praise  
God becomingly ? Do we remember,  
C 3 how

SER M. how the great Teacher of Thanksgiving


1. summons up every One of his Faculties  
 Ps ciii 1. to assist him in it? *Bless the Lord, O my Soul! and all that is within me, bless his holy Name!* 'Tis a Work that will employ *all that is within us*, will call for all the Application, and Vigour, and Warmth, that we can possibly bestow upon it. Cold and languid Praise, is no Praise; this Sacrifice can be no longer acceptable than 'tis burning.

To those Men, who live in the *Contempt* of this Duty, we have also somewhat to say, if they would but hear us. They are generally such, as pretend a high Sense of the Dignity of human Nature, and bear no small Respect to their own Understandings. Now, tho' other Parts of Religious Worship should happen to be too mean and low for such great Minds to take up with; yet This, methinks, might deserve to be thought Equal to them. Let Confession and Prayer go only for the Arts of Whining and Begging, and be as much beneath them as they imagine; yet surely,  
 Praise

Praise hath somewhat in it so great, S E R M.  
and so noble, as may invite them to 1.  
practise it. 'Tis a Subject, fit for the   
most enlarg'd Capacities to dwell on ;  
and such an one, as even Those would  
certainly find themselves rais'd and im-  
prov'd by.


If it were possible for These Men to  
have a Relish of any thing in this Kind,  
we would desire them to make the Tryal ;  
to take the Hymn, call'd *Te Deum*, into  
their Hands, and to read it attentively ;  
and then tell us truly, whether they did  
not find their Minds fill'd, and their Af-  
fections strangely rais'd by the Images  
which there occur'd to them ; Whether  
they did not perceive themselves to be  
somewhat above themselves, whilst they  
were perusing it. And these Effects, of  
which every Man, who joins in that  
Hymn, must be sensible, are owing to  
that Majestick Plainness and Simplicity  
of Thought which goes through it,  
Unadorned by Words, Unenlivened by  
Figures ! 'Tis the Matter alone which  
supports the Expression : And because

S E R M. the Matter therein contain'd, is, the Ex-

I. cellencies of the Divine Nature, the pure  
 and genuine Objects of Praise; there-  
 fore is the Hymn itself so lofty and  
 moving.

But, alas! We speak in vain! The Men, who are bold enough to slight a Duty of this Rank and Character, will easily slight every thing that can be offer'd to bring them to it. All we can say to them is, that, as God made them for his Glory, so he will certainly serve the Ends of that Glory upon them, one way or another. And therefore, if they will not freely praise him for his Goodness in this World, they shall surely, whether they will or no, contribute to the Praise of his Justice in the next.

V. Thus have I attempted to Describe this Duty, to set out the great *Reasonableness*, and to stir You' up to the *Practice* of it. And certainly, it was never more reasonable, than on This Occasion, when we commemorate such  
 Past,


Past, and feel such Present Mercies. The S E R M.  
Restoration of the Monarchy, and of I.  
all those Blessings in Church and State   
that came back with it; the Re-esta-  
blishment of the *Beauty of Praise* in  
our Sanctuary, the Return of Peace and  
Plenty, of Learning, and all the Arts  
of Civil Life; the Reducing us from  
Confusion and Rage, into Order and  
Friendliness, and making Us a Nation  
at Unity in itself; Lovely at home,  
and Terrible abroad. These were such  
sound and substantial Blessings as will  
wear well; and though done a great  
while ago, will yet deserve a great while  
hence a Place in our Kalendars. Nei-  
ther Love to our Country, nor the  
Honour we bear to Those who rule  
over Us; neither Our Gratitude to God,  
nor our Good-will towards Men, will  
suffer such Wonders of Providence to  
slip out of our Minds; or the Day in  
which they were brought about, easily to  
grow Old upon Us.

SERM. The Benefits, we then received, were

I. indeed exceeding great, and would justly  
 ~~~~~ claim a larger Share in our present  
 Reflections, had not the Goodness of  
 God taken off our Thoughts a little  
 from that Subject, by calling us to the  
 Acknowledgment of New Loving Kind-  
 nesses. For, behold, what glorious  
 Things the Lord hath again wrought for  
 Us! Blessing their Majesties Forces with  
 a great and signal Victory over the most  
 haughty and insolent of Enemies: A  
 Victory so Early, so Complete, and so  
 Cheaply purchas'd, that we have some  
 Reason to hope, it may fix the Fortune  
 of the War, and put an End to the De-  
 structions of the Destroyer; to whom  
 we trust, God hath now said, as to the  
 Sea itself, — *Hitherto shalt thou come,  
 but not farther; and here shall thy proud  
 Waves be stayed.*

Job  
 xxxviii.  
 11.

Blessed be God, who did not utterly  
 cast out our Prayers; and our Supplica-  
 tions; but delay'd only to answer them,  
 till a *Day of Salvation*, till an *accept-  
 able Time*, when the Mercy would be  
 dearer

dearer to Us, and his Goodness more S E R M.  
remarkably seen in bestowing it! 1.  
when we were alarm'd with Invasions   
from Abroad, and Conspiracies at  
Home; when Men threatned to *swal-*  
*low us up quick*; when Success was  
now so requisite to preserve the Ho-  
nour of the Nation, to support their  
Majesties Throne, and to strengthen the  
Hands of their Allies: Then did he  
appear, and own Our Cause; Then was  
the God of Hosts our Strength, and  
our Shield. Surely, *There is no End of*  
*that Goodness*, which continues thus to  
pursue us; which vouchsafes to establish  
to Us, and to our Posterity, those Bles-  
sings, under which we have been so un-  
thankful, and so ingrateful already! and  
to give us fresh Opportunities of Praise,  
which I hope we shall make a better  
Use of!

Let us, therefore, *Offer unto God*  
*Thanksgiving*; and not That only, but  
*Ourselfes* also, *our Souls and Bodies,*  
*to be a Reasonable, Holy, and Lively*  
*Sacrifice*: Let us render him the Fruit  
of



S E R M. of our Lips, and the Obedience of our

I. Lives, that these Blessings may not prove  
a Curse to us; but that He may still be  
Our God, and We may be his People.

*To Him, with the Son, and the Holy  
Ghost, be all Honour, Praise and  
Glory, henceforth, and for ever-  
more! Amen.*

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*The POWER of Charity to Cover Sin.*

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A  
S E R M O N


Preach'd before the  
President *and* Governors  
Of the HOSPITALS of  
*Bridewell and Bethlehem,*  
I N  
BRIDEWELL-CHAPEL,  
*August 16, 1694.*

---

I St. PETER iv. 8.  
*Charity shall Cover the Multitude of Sins.*

GOD be thanked, the frequent Re-  
turns of such Pious Meetings as  
these, in this Rich and Charitable CITY,  
have

SE R M.  
II.



SERM. have made the general Argument of

I. CHARITY, the Nature and chief Properties, the several Grounds and Reasons of this Duty so well understood, that, to Entertain you with a Discourse at large on that Subject, would be a very needless and useless Attempt. So many Eminent Pens have gone before, in this Way, as have left it very difficult for those who come after, either to say any thing which They *have not* said, or not to say That much worse, which They *have*.

Upon this Account, and because, indeed, I take General Discourses, for the most Part, to be like Large Prospects, where the Eye is lost by the wide Compass it takes, and sees so many things at once, that it sees nothing distinctly; I have chosen at present to point Your Thoughts only on One particular Property of this Great Virtue, which hath been not often handled, I think; and even Then, not always well understood: It is That, which the Apostle St. *Peter* proposeth to Us, in those few Words I have

have read to You, ——— *Charity shall cover* SERM.  
*the Multitude of Sins.*

I.  
~~~~~

Few as they are, they will sufficiently employ our Thoughts at this time, if we consider, in the

*First* Place, The several Explications I. that have been given of them, and satisfy ourselves which of These ought to take Place. If,

*Secondly*, We free That One True II. Genuine Meaning of the Words from the Exceptions which lie against it. If,

*Thirdly*, We establish the Truth laid III. down upon its proper Grounds and Reasons. And if,

*Fourthly*, We make some few useful IV. Deductions from it.

After this is done, the little Time that V. is left, will properly be spent in applying what hath been said more immediately to the Occasion of this present Assembly.

*Cha-*

S E R M. *Charity shall Cover the Multitude of*

II. *Sins.*

I.

There is scarce any Man, I believe, who hears these Words, that is not ready to frame to himself this Sense of them; “ That the Virtue of *Charity* “ is of so great Price in the Sight of “ God, that Those Persons, who possess “ and exercise it in any Eminent manner, are peculiarly Entitled to the “ Divine Favour and Pardon, with regard to numberless Slips and Failings “ in their Duty, which they may be “ otherwise Guilty of: This Great Christian Perfection, of which they are “ Masters, shall make many Little Imperfections to be overlook’d and unobserv’d; it shall *Cover the Multitude of Sins.*

This, I say, is the account, which every Man naturally gives himself of these Words, at his first hearing them; and it is for That very Reason probably, that That is the True and Genuine Account of them. For, supposing the  
Original.

Original Text to be well and clearly rendered in our Version, it will, I am of Opinion, be found, that That Sense of any Passage, which, after attending to the Force of the Words, and to their Coherence with what goes before, and what follows, First occurs to the Mind, is generally the Justest and Truest. SERM.  
II.

This hath not however been always thought a Good Rule in the present Case. For several Pious, and some Judicious Men, finding the Words, in their plain and familiar Meaning, to carry somewhat of a suspicious Sound with them, and to border a little (as They Thought) on the Papal Doctrine of *Works Meritorious*, have, therefore, taken some Pains to give a Different Interpretation of them. I shall offer, first, to your View some of these mistaken Senses, ere I come to consider that which, I think, was intended by St. *Peter*; because Each of these doth certainly propose a Clear and Apposite Truth to us, tho' perhaps not truly drawn from the Passage now before us.


## S E R M.

II.



*First*, then, the Words have been understood to contain an Account of that particular Instance of Charity, which we call *Good-Nature* : by which we pass by little Sights and Injuries, interpret Things in the best Sense, are not apt to take, or return an Affront, not forward to publish, or believe an ill Report of any One : by which we turn our Eyes always towards the best Side of a Man, and chuse rather to look on his Virtues than his Failures ; and by which we constantly interpose our good Offices, wherever we think they may be serviceable, either to the composing Old Differences, or preventing New ones.

And This Sense is grounded upon a supposed Relation there is between These Words in *St. Peter*, and Those in the *Proverbs* ; *Hate stirreth up Strifes, but Love covereth all Sins*. Now, tho' indeed, in *Our Translation*, there is some Similitude between the Words of the Text, and this Passage in the *Proverbs* ; yet, as it lies in the *Septuagint-Version* (which

(which the Apostles made use of) it S E R M.:  
 bears no such Resemblance to the Text II.  
 as may make it probable that the One   
 ought to be Expounded by the Other.  
 On the contrary, it deserves Observation,  
 that, where-ever the *Greek Phrase* \*, which  
 is here translated by *Covering Sin*, oc-  
 curs in Scripture, it constantly signifies See Psal.  
 that Pardon of Sin which proceeds from lxxxiv. 1.  
*God*, not any Instances of Good Nature xxxii. 1.  
 and Forgiveness exercised by *Men*. and Neh.  
iv. 5.

We may farther observe, that This  
 Sense of the Words is by no means full  
 enough to bear the Weight of that em-  
 phatic and solemn Preface with which  
 the Apostle introduces them: *but above*  
*all things* (says He, in the Words im-  
 mediately before the Text) *have fervent*  
*Charity among your selves: for Charity*  
*shall Cover the Multitude of Sins.* Ἐκτενῇ  
 ἀγάπῃ, intense, or fervent Charity must  
 signify somewhat more than the bare Acts  
 and Offices of *Good-Nature*. If they, to

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\* Καλύψαν ἁμαρτίας.



S E R M. whom the Apostle wrote, were *above all*

II. *things* to have  *fervent Charity* among themselves, it could not be for This Reason, because Charity would render them inoffensive towards Others, and not easy to be offended Themselves. For tho' This be a commendable Degree of Virtue, and very fit to be enjoined, because not frequently practised ; yet can it not deserve that peculiar Emphasis and Stress which is here laid upon it. Especially, if we consider it as succeeding the mention of those more important and necessary Duties, to which the Apostle exhorts them in the preceding Verse, the *being sober, and watching unto Prayer* : *Above* all which, it cannot be supposed, that the Duty of conversing with one another according to the Rules of *Good-Nature* and *Gentleness* should be enjoined.

The Words, therefore, have, in the *Second Place*, been thus also interpreted, *Charity shall cover the multitude of Sins* ; that is, says the excellent *Grotius*, it will have a mighty Influence towards reclaim-  
ing

ing Sinners from the Error of their Ways; S E R M.  
 the Consequence of which is, That the II.  
 Sins of Men thus reclaimed, are pardoned,   
 or covered. Charity, which is an exalted  
 Love of God and our Neighbour, will  
 make us industrious in procuring Glory  
 to the One, by the Salvation of the  
 Other. It will create a mighty Zeal for  
 the Interests of Virtue, and the Honour  
 of the Gospel, and the Good of Souls;  
 and it will run through all the Difficul-  
 ties that lie in the way towards so good  
 an End, with Readiness and Pleasure. It  
 will not be frightened from making At-  
 tempts even on Those of the first Rank  
 in Wickedness, the Worst and most  
 Hardned of Men; because it knows, that  
*Their* Revolt from Sin to Virtue (if it  
 can be compass'd) will be of mighty  
 Consequence to Religion, and will pro-  
 bably draw whole Troops of Common  
 Sinners along with it: The Sense they  
 have of their Own Sins being covered,  
 will make *Them* also eager in their turn  
 to cover those of Other Men.

SERM. This is a very Good and Pious Sense

II. of the Words, but (I believe, it will  
 be allow'd me) no very Easy and Natural One: they must be rack'd ere they can be brought to confess This Meaning. However it was what that Learned Person was led into by a former Explication he had made of a parallel Place in St. *James*; which I shall crave leave to produce at length, and to comment upon, because I take it to be the *Key* of the Text, which easily and readily lets us into the True Sense of it. *Brethren* (says St. *James*, at the Conclusion of his Epistle) *if any One of You do Err from the Truth, and One Convert him, let him know, that he which converteth a Sinner from the Error of his Ways, shall save a Soul from Death, and shall hide a Multitude of Sins.* He intended to shut up the Epistle with recommending to them one of the most important and useful Virtues, That of endeavouring the Conversion and Reformation of Men. And he intended also to stir them up to the Exercise of this Vir-

JAMES V.  
19, 20.

tue

tue by the most powerful Motives he SERM.  
 could propose: What are they? Why,  
 first, That *He who converteth a Sinner* II.  
*from the Error of his Ways*, should con-  
 sider, that he *sa<sup>v</sup>eth a Soul from Death*;  
 and then, secondly, and chiefly, That  
 he *shall* [also] *cover a Multitude of Sins*.  
 Whose Sins? Those of the Converted  
 Person? Nay, but that was already  
 said, and much more than that in the  
 foregoing Motive, *He shall save a Soul*  
*from Death*: for surely the saving a Soul  
 from Death, necessarily includes and pre-  
 supposes the Remission of its Sins. It  
 must then be meant of His Sins who  
 makes, and not of His who becomes,  
 the Convert: And Thus indeed this  
 Last Clause carries a New Motive in it,  
 distinct from that in the Former; and  
 such an One as riseth beyond it, and  
 more sensibly touches those to whom  
 it is address'd; and was therefore fit to  
 be propos'd in the Last place, and to be  
 left, as a Sting in their Minds. 'Tis  
 as if St. *James* had said more at length,  
 " Let such an one know, that He shall,

SERM. " by this Means, not *only* save a Soul


II. " from Death (though This itself be a  
 ~~~~~ " very Great and Desireable Thing) but  
 " shall *also* (which more nearly con-  
 " cerns him) secure to himself on this  
 " Account the Pardon of many Sins.

Now the Words of St. *James* here explain'd, are exactly the same with those of St. *Peter*, in my Text; and the Occasion upon which they are introduced, and their Dependence on the Context, is much the same in both Places; except only that they are used in my Text, as a Motive to Charity in general; but in St. *James*, with Regard only to One main and eminent Branch of it, the Conversion of Souls: What therefore St. *James* means by them, is meant also by St. *Peter*: And, consequently, that most Obvious and Easy Sense, which I mentioned at the Entrance of this Discourse, is, in all Probability, the Truest: And, as such, I shall take the Liberty here once again to repeat it. It is This, " That the Virtue of Charity is of so  
 " great Price in the Sight of God, that  
 " They,

" They, who possess and exercise it in SERM.  
 " any Eminent Manner, are peculiarly II.  
 " entitled to the Divine Favour and Par-  
 " don, with regard to numberless Slips  
 " and Failings in their Duty, which they  
 " may be Otherwise guilty of. This  
 " great Christian Perfection, of which  
 " they are Masters, shall make many  
 " little Imperfections to be over-look'd  
 " and unobserv'd; It *shall Cover the*  
 " *Multitude of Sins.*

Nor are there wanting parallel Places  
 in other Parts of Holy Writ, which con-  
 firm this Interpretation of the Words  
 and the Doctrine contained in it. For  
 besides those Passages in the Apocryphal  
 Writers, which directly affirm, that *Alms* Tob.xii.9.  
*shall purge away Sin*, and that, *As Water* Eccles. iii.  
*quencheth Flaming Fire, so Alms ma-* 30.  
*ketb an Atonement for Sins*; there are in  
 the Books of *Proverbs*, and *Daniel*, two  
 Texts, very express to this Purpose: In  
 the first of these, the *Wise Man* declares,  
 that *by Mercy and Truth Iniquity is pur-* Pro.xvi.6.  
*ged*; and in the Latter the Prophet coun-  
 sels *Nebuchadnezzar*, to *break off his* Dan. iv.  
*Sins* 27.


SERM. *Sins by Righteousness*, (or rather, as it

II. is in all the Ancient Versions, to redeem  
 his Sins by Alms-deeds) *and his Iniquities by shewing Mercy to the Poor*. And were it proper in this Place to vouch the Testimony of the Earliest Writers of the Church, it were easy to produce, from their Works, Passages without Number, wherein they speak the same Language.

I fear I have been tedious in settling the *Sense of the Words*: but it is no more than was requisite, in so important a Point, so little insisted on from the Pulpit: and which may be thought liable to some Just *Exceptions*.

II. *These* I am now, in the *Second Place*, to propose, and shall endeavour to remove. The doing of which will give me an Occasion of clearing the Sense, and limiting the Bounds of this Truth more exactly and fully.

The *First* and great Exception against This way of Expounding the Text is, that it gives too great a Colour to the  
 Popish

Popish Doctrines of *Merit* and *Superero-* S E R M.  
*gation*; and seems to lessen the Worth II.  
of the only True and Proper Satisfaction   
for Sin, made by our Saviour on  
the Cross. For, at this Rate, what  
need of Remission of Sin in every Case  
by the Blood of Christ, since We our-  
selves are in Good Measure capable of  
making the Atonement? We who have  
it, it seems, in our Power, by the Ex-  
ercise of one Particular Virtue to secure  
a Pardon to ourselves for neglecting  
all the rest; and can blot out the Re-  
membrance of an Ill-spent Life, by a  
few Acts of Charity at the Close of  
it? As if God were so much beholden  
to us for our Good Deeds, as to be  
bound, for their Sakes, to forgive us our  
Ill Ones! Or, as if the Performance of  
our Duty in One Case, could make any  
manner of Amends to him for our Non-  
performance of it in another! This, say  
They, is very Easy and Comfortable Di-  
vinity!

To take off the Force of this Objec-  
tion, it will be requisite to reflect a lit-  
tle



SERM. II. on these following Considerations.

II. And,

~~~~~ If, We must Explain ourselves a little more particularly, What is to be understood by that *Charity*, to which the Promise of the Text is made; What it is in the *Nature* and *Extent*, and what in the *Intention* and *Degree* of it.

As to its *Nature* and *Extent*, it must be understood to signify not barely *Acts of Relief* to the Poor and Needy, as the Vulgar and Confined Use of the Word imports; but, more largely, all the several Ways of *Universal Beneficence* and *Kindness*, by which one Man can be serviceable to another. Farther, it expresses not the *Outward Material Act* only, but must be supposed to take in also the *Vital Form* of it, that *Inward Principle* of a *Sincere Love* towards *God* and *Man*, from whence it regularly flows; and separated from which, the meer external Act is a Lifeless and Useless Performance. And Then, even of Charity thus Largely understood, it is *not a common Degree* that is meant here; 'Tis to an Intense or  
Fer-


Fervent Charity, to a mighty and extra-<sup>S E R M.</sup>ordinary Measure of it, that this mighty<sup>11.</sup> and extraordinary Blessing is expressly said to belong.

2dly, Even of this Exalted Degree of Charity, it is not said, *that it shall cover all manner of Transgressions*, how Gross and Heinous soever ; The Words of the Text do by no means carry us to assert thus much concerning it : but only (as you have heard them Explain'd to You) seem to say, that it shall be our Excuse for many lesser Neglects and Failings in our Duty, many Sins of Infirmary, Surprise, and Daily Incurſion ; which are properly enough styl'd *the Multitude of Sins* : It shall Cover such Offences only, as are consistent with a State of True *Charity* ; and surely Those cannot be very Gross and Presumptuous. For He, who lives in the Perfect Exercise of that Fervent *Charity*, which the Text recommends, abounding Inwardly and Outwardly in all the various Instances and Expressions of it, and in those several Virtues and Graces which  
do

S E R M. do naturally attend it: I say, whoever


11. he is, that is thoroughly posselt and acted  
 by this Divine Principle of *Love*, cannot be supposed capable of committing any Heinous Sins, *whilst* he is under the Guidance of it: And as for Those which he had fallen into before the Attainment of this Gift, They were certainly remitted also and cover'd, *before* the Attainment of it; else, doubtless, he had never attain'd it. So that no Great Guilt of any Kind can well be thought to harbour in that Breast, where true Charity dwells.

Indeed, it is not universally certain, that, whenever God remits the *Guilt* of Sin, he remits the Punishment too (the *Temporal Punishment*, I mean) for Wicked Men, upon their Return to Virtue, do not seldom find, to their Cost, that a Sin may be pardoned, and yet all the Ill Consequences of it not prevented; and they can, therefore, often trace the Steps of their former Misdoings, in the several Evils of Life that afterwards befall them. And in This Sense, therefore,  
 it

it may be, and is probably true, that S E R M.  
 Charity shall cover many Sins, even of 11.  
 the first Magnitude; *i. e.* it shall prevent   
 the Temporal Inflictions due to them,  
 and often, even after Pardon obtain'd,  
 pursuing the Committers of them: But  
 it contributes to a Removal of the *Guilt*  
 only of such Frailties and Infirmities of  
 a lesser Size, as may be thought con-  
 sistent with a State of Charity. And  
 therefore, to except against the Doctrine  
 laid down, as encouraging the Charita-  
 ble Man to expect Remission of all Man-  
 ner of Sins, how great and how numer-  
 ous soever, is to load it with a Dif-  
 ficulty which doth no ways belong to it.  
 But,

*3dly*, Even as to these slighter Omis-  
 sions and Failings, it is not pretended,  
 that they are cover'd by Acts of Mercy  
 and Charity in any Sense, but what in-  
 cludes the Application of the Merits of  
 our Saviour's Blood, the only Fountain of  
 Satisfaction for all Kind of Sins, for  
 the Least as well as the Greatest. It is  
 true indeed, and granted, that the  
 Blood

SERM. Blood of Christ alone can expiate Sin.

11.  However, this hinders not but that God may make such and such Acts of Ours the *Conditions* and Grounds (as it were) of applying the Virtue of that Blood to us. And thus Our Good Works, tho' they are not the *meritorious*, yet may become, if I may so speak, the *occasional*, Cause of Pardon and Grace to us. And if This be establishing the Popish Doctrine of Salvation by Works, then hath our Saviour Himself, I fear, establish'd it, in that Divine Form of Prayer, in which he hath taught us to say, *Forgive Us Our Trespases, as We forgive Those that Trespas against Us. As We forgive Those! i. e. Inasmuch as, on That very Account (among Others) because, we forgive Those that trespass against Us. Where, we see, the Exercise of one great Instance of Charity, Forgiveness of Enemies, is made the Ground of our asking and expecting Forgiveness from God.*

4thly and *Lastly*, It follows not, that because so Vast a Recompence is promis'd

to


to a Fervent Charity, therefore the Exercise of it is in the Way of *Supererogation*, so that we might have let it alone without Fault or Blame. We may be strictly, and by the very Letter of the Law, obliged to it; and yet it may include so high a Pitch of Perfection, and one so seldom attain'd, that God may think fit, where-ever it is attain'd, mightily to reward it; and to encourage us towards doing our Duty in some One Great Point, by an Assurance, that in many smaller Instances he will not be *Extreme to mark what is done amiss* by us. Our Gracious Master deals with Us in This Case, as a Man oftentimes doth with his Servant; if he be Trusty and Faithful to him in a Business of Great Concern and Moment, tho' his Duty bound him to be so, yet shall that Piece of Eminent Service excuse many Neglects and Failings upon Other Occasions.

There is yet a *Second Objection*, tho' indeed so slight an One, as, after the Former hath been removed, is scarce worth mentioning. It is taken from that Say-

S E R M. ing of our Lord, That They *will* Love

II. much, to whom much *hath been* forgiven.

Contrary to which, the Text, as here expounded, seems to affirm, that They who *do* love much, *shall* have much Forgiven them. But these two Truths are easily reconcil'd: For it is not hard to understand, how That, which is the *Cause* of a thing in One Respect, may be the *Effect* of it in another. And accordingly, it may be very true, that He, who is Forgiven much, will, for that very Reason, Love much: And it may be as True, that He, who thus Loveth much, because much hath been Forgiven him, shall, on that very Account, have much more forgiven him. 'Tis just the same Case as between Me and my Friend: I may passionately love him, because he hath pardon'd me the Great and many Injuries I formerly did him, while we were at Variance: And again, the Knowledge he hath of my Love, may incline him to pass over any Future Mistakes and Miscarriages, whereby I may happen to offend him.

The Doctrine being thus fix'd, and SERM.  
 freed from Exception; I go on, as I pro- II.  
 pos'd, in the *Third Place*, to enquire into   
 the *Grounds and Reasons* of this Won-  
 drous Efficacy, so particularly attributed  
 to the Exercise of Charity: For we read  
 not that God hath annex'd this Promise  
 to any other Grace or Virtue of the Chri-  
 stian Life whatsoever, but to This only,  
 that it *shall cover Sin*; of which these  
 several Accounts may, with some Proba-  
 bility, be given.


1<sup>st</sup>, That It was really more fit and  
 proper that such a Return as this should  
 be made to Charity, than to any other  
 Virtue; because it adjusts and propor-  
 tions the Reward of Acting to the Act it  
 self; and makes the Duty of Man to-  
 wards God, and the Blessing of God up-  
 on the Performance of that Duty, to  
 have a near Relation and Resemblance to  
 Each other. I explain myself in this man-  
 ner: The Chief Employment, the highest  
 Point and Perfection of Charity is, to  
 pass by the Offences and Injuries of Men;



S E R M. to pardon the Malice of our Enemies, and

II. the Ingratitude of our Friends. To Him  
 therefore, who advances to this Height of  
 Virtue, God hath very *aptly* and *suitably*  
 promis'd, that His Faults and Offences  
 too shall be pardon'd: as he deals with  
 his Neighbour so will God deal with  
 Him: Mercy shall be shew'd upon Him,  
 who shews Mercy: if we forgive Other  
 Men their Trespases, then will our  
 Heavenly Father forgive us our Trespases  
 also. There is, You see, a strict  
 Analogy betwixt the Reward annex'd,  
 and one Great Instance of the Virtue en-  
 join'd: which is God's Method of put-  
 ting us in Mind of what we are to Do,  
 by his Promises, as well as his Commands;  
 and of exciting Us to endeavour after a  
 Perfection, not easily attain'd, by assu-  
 ring Us, that the Exercise of it shall, in  
 the very same kind, return doubly and  
 trebly into our Own Bosom. But,

*2dly*, The Good and Charitable Man  
 is peculiarly entitled to the Pardon of  
 many Sins, because he is in a peculiar  
 manner liable to incur the Guilt of ma-  
 ny;

ny; either from the *Natural Frame and* S F R M.  
*Make* of his Mind, which disposes him II.  
 to this Virtue, or from the very *Exercise*   
 of the Virtue itself.

Charity is grafted always on Good-Nature, and a Sweetness of Disposition: which though it be a Temper of Mind very lovely and desireable; yet is it such a, in the Circumstances of our present Imperfect State, hath its Inconveniences; and is what makes Conversation dangerous in a World, where we are surrounded with Temptations. It hinders us from arming ourselves with that obstinate Resolution of Mind, that stubborn incomplying Virtue, which is requisite to preserve a Man undefil'd and blameless. It makes us easy and yielding to Common Customs, and receiv'd Opinions; Ready to comply with a Thousand things (of which we are not exactly well satisfied) upon the pure score of good Nature, and because we cannot allow ourselves to be troublesome. And being found and known to be of this Easy and Complying Temper; this very thing will


S E R M. invite Ill Spirits, and Ill Men, to make

II. their Attempts upon us.

And then the \* *Exercise* of the Virtue itself especially where the Principle of it is strong, lays us open to several Failings. It makes us omit oftentimes the Duties incumbent on us from our Professions and Callings; and perhaps neglect to take care of Those, whom it is the First Point of Charity to take care of, our Children and Families. It warms us with such a Zeal for doing Good, as breaks out sometimes into Acts, not reconcileable to the Rules of Discretion, Decency, and Right Reason; and which do real Dis-service to the Cause of God and Religion, instead of promoting it. St. *Francis's* Charity went a little too far, when it was taken up in providing for Birds, and Beasts, after a most Extraordinary and Singular manner: the Virtue was not at all beholden to him for being shew'd in

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\* Ἀγάπη ζῶσα (τὸ τοῦ δὲ τὸ πᾶσι τοῖς ἀγαθῶν, μὴ μόνον γὰρ ἐν ἀγαθῶν παρῶν, τοῖς ἀπὸ ἐξῆς χρησιμῶν ἀντὶ). Chrysoſt. de Sacerdot. p. 250. Ed. Cant.

such a Dress, as, instead of rendring it S E R M.  
 desireable in the Eyes of Men, made it II.  
 look ridiculous. 

Indeed Love (the Spring-Head of Charity) as it is the sweetest of All Passions, so is one of the strongest too; and, if it have the Reins but once given to it, will go near to run away with its Rider: that is, if a due Care be not taken of it, it will exalt our Fancy so high, and disorder it so much, as to put it out of the Reach and Rule of the Governing Powers of the Mind. And then, what wild Work doth there follow! Instead of Wise and Rational Ways of Beneficence, foolish Undertakings, and impracticable Designs! Instead of a manly and sober Form of Devotion, all the extravagant Rants and silly Freaks of Enthusiasm! For the Proof of which I appeal to the Lives of many of those Saints to whom the Church of *Rome* hath allow'd a Place in her Kalendar!

Finally, the Charitable Man, who loves every thing, doth not fail sometimes to love his own Virtue too; I mean, that

S E R M. he is apt to over-rate the just Price of it,

II. and too much to undervalue every thing  
 else in Comparifon of it. A Man may be fo much ftruck with the Beauty and Excellence of Charity, as to be lefs concerned than he ought to be for a found *Faith*, and make Shipwreck of the One, whilft he is too haftily and zealoufly purfuing the Other.

Thus, I fay, the Good and Merciful Man, being particularly liable to fome Infirmities, is as particularly comforted with a gracious Affurance of their Pardon.

3<sup>dly</sup>, God feems on purpofe to have plac'd this Mark of Difinction upon Charity, to fhew us, how tender and careful He is of *Our* Welfare; what Bowels of Love and Compaffion he hath for Us: Since that is His Favourite Virtue, the Virtue he chiefly delights in, and delights to reward; the Excercise of which is moft sweet and comfortable, moft ufeul and advantageous to the Sons of Men. He design'd, by This Convincing Instance of his Goodnefs, to prove

to us, that he was not an hard and rigorous Master, who enjoin'd us Commands, for his *Own* sake, and purely for the Pleasure of being Obey'd; but that his great Intention was to twist our Duty and our Happiness together: And therefore, the more our Ease and Advantage was concern'd in the Practice of any Virtue, the stronger Ties and Engagements to it was he resolv'd to lay upon us.

*4thly*, Charity is particularly available to procure a Remission of the Guilt of Sin, and a Relaxation of the Punishment due to it; because it particularly engages in our Behalf the Prayers of all Good Men, and of all Those Persons to whom the Influences of our Goodness extend. A Kind and Beneficent Man, as He is a Common Blessing to the World, so is He blest'd by all Mankind that know him: All are ready to Implore the Mercies of God, Spiritual and Temporal, upon the Merciful-minded; especially the Poor and Miserable, (whose Prayers God hath in a particular manner promis'd to hear) are constant and earnest Intercessors at the Thrope

SERM.

II.



S E R M. Tirone of Grace for him. So that, where-

11. as the Possessors of other Virtues stand  
 chiefly upon their own Bottom for the  
 obtaining Pardon and Grace, Every Man  
 almost becomes a Supplicant for the  
 Merciful and Liberal: and no wonder,  
 therefore, if such United Requests pre-  
 vail. But,

5thly, and principally, God hath made  
 this Promise to *Charity*, and to no Other  
 Virtue, because it is really the Chief and  
 most Excellent of Virtues, and the most  
 Excellent Thing ought to have the most  
 Excellent Reward. It is the great Per-  
 fection, the distinguishing Grace of a Chri-  
 stian, preferable to Faith and Hope, in  
 Dignity, in Use, and in the Length of its  
 Duration, as St. *Paul* hath taught us to  
 reason concerning it. It is call'd the  
*Great Commandment* \*, the *End of the*  
*Commandment* †, and the *Fulfilling of the*  
*Law* ‡: and it is really what it is called.  
 For where this Divine Grace dwells, and  
 reigns, there no Moral Attainment of any  
 kind can be totally wanting. Charity is  
 the

\* Matth.


xxii 38.

† 1 Tim.

1. 5

‡ Rom

xiii. 10

the Queen of Virtues\* ; the rest are of SERM.  
 Her Retinue, and Train, as it were ; con- II.  
 stantly attending on Her, appearing, and   
 disappearing with Her : and well, there-  
 fore, as a Queen, is she invested by God  
 with that Sovereign Prerogative, the  
 Power of Covering Sin. It is her Na-  
 ture to be comprehensive of, and abound-  
 ing in many Duties ; and, therefore, it  
 is Her Reward also, to be a Skreen for  
 many Failings. Charity is said in Scrip-  
 ture to establish a True Friendship, and  
 to create a Real Likeness between God  
 and Man : God passeth by the Faults,  
 therefore of the Charitable, as a Friend  
 doth those of his Friend ; the Great Re-  
 semblance of the Divine Nature, which  
 shines out in him, hides every Lesser Sort  
 and Degree of Unlikeness, and makes it  
 not to be discerned.

'Tis difficult to stop on so fruitful a  
 Subject ; and yet more difficult to ex-  
 press one's self becomingly and well. The  
 Tongues of Men and Angels, as they are


---

\* Βασιλὶς τῶν ἀρετῶν. Chrys. T. VI. p. 193.

said




S E R M. said to be a worthless Gift, in comparison of Charity, so are they not All able

II.  to set out Half the Worth and Excellence of it. St. *Paul* hath done somewhat towards it, in the XIII<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the First Epistle to the *Corinthians*; and to Him I refer You.

IV. It remains, that I should make those few *Inferences* I intended from the Whole, and then point out all that hath been said particularly, upon the Occasion of this Present Assembly. And,

1<sup>st</sup>, The Truth, which hath been explain'd, suggests to us One Argument against their Opinion, who hold *Justification*, and all the Graces of the Gospel to be convey'd to us by *Faith alone*; in such a Sense as excludes any manner of Regard to our *Works*. For if Justification be The putting a Man into a State of Favour with God by Remission of Sin, then Works of Charity, which contribute to the Remission of our Sins, must contribute also to our Justification. This Point goes generally for a *Speculative Nicety*,

Nicety, not worth insisting upon: But s E R M. II.  
 surely They, who think it so, have not  
 well considered, what Influence it hath   
 experimentally had upon *Practice*, and a  
 Good Life, in many of its Assertors.  
 Some Spiritual Libertines of the *Anti-*  
*nomian* Way, have by it undermined the  
 very Design of the Gospel; and set us  
 free from the Necessity of being Pious,  
 Just, or Good, upon any other Principle,  
 but that of pure *Gratitude* only. And  
 in Those who do not rise to these mad  
 Heights, yet the Persuasions They have  
 entertain'd about Justifying Faith, are  
 observed mightily to lessen their Esteem  
 of Good Works: and from esteeming  
 them less, to come to practise them less,  
 is, God knows, a very Easy Step, and  
 almost an unavoidable One! Witness  
 the celebrated *Institutions* of a great Di-  
 vine, in which of *Faith* much every where,  
 of *Charity* little any where is spoken; and  
 we are not, therefore, to wonder, if the  
 Rules of Charity should in that Book be  
 as little observed. Indeed these very  
 Rules of Charity, (which I would not  
 willingly

S E R M. willingly, while I am mentioning, trans-

11. greſs) induce me to think, That many  
 ~~~~~ Learned and Pious Men hold this Doctr-  
 ine of Juſtification by Faith alone, in  
 its moſt rigid Senſe, without holding,  
 or even diſcerning the Ill Conſequences  
 that attend it. However, ſince the Ill  
 Conſequences of this Doctrine are ſuffi-  
 ciently plain, both from Reaſon, and  
 Experience, (tho' ſuch Men happen not  
 to perceive them) the ſame Rules of Cha-  
 rity forbid us, when the Subject falls in  
 our way, to be ſilent concerning them,  
 or ſuffer Men to think, that thoſe, who  
 exclude good Works from being any  
 ways Inſtrumental towards Juſtifying a  
 Sinner, are guilty only of an Innocent  
 Miſtake, which reacheth no farther than  
 bare Speculation. A


2d, Inference is, That, if a Spirit of  
 Charity ſhall cover a Multitude of Sins,  
 then may we aſſure ourſelves, that the  
 contrary Temper, a Spirit of Hatred,  
 Malignity, and Ill Will, ſhall cover a  
 Multitude of Virtues; *i. e.* They ſhall  
 not be reckoned as Virtues to Him who,  
 poſſeſſeth

possesseth them; Neither God nor Man shall regard them as such, if Charity doth not Crown them. Charity covers many Sins, because it is so noble and so excellent a Virtue: what Virtue then, beyond this, can there be found, of Value sufficient to cover the Sin of Uncharitableness?

3<sup>dly</sup>, From the Promise made in the Text, We may take an Occasion to reflect on the wondrous Goodness and Condescension of God. He hath a Right to all the highest Instances and Degrees of Virtue that is possible for us to abound in; and when we have practis'd them to the utmost, we have done but what we were strictly oblig'd to do: And yet so far he is pleas'd to abate of this Right, as to accept the Performance of One Great Duty in lieu of the Omission of many Others. An Act of Grace and Kindness, which is enhanc'd to Us, by considering, that Reason never did, or could make this known to the Heathen World; although the Gospel hath now reveal'd it to Us. Nay, remarkable it is,

SERM. (as I observ'd to you before) that this

II. Great Duty, which is to compensate, as  
 it were, for all our Failings, is the most  
 pleasant and delightful Employment that  
 belongs to us; the most agreeable to our  
 Nature and the most useful to our Fel-  
 low-Creatures. Let us not complain,  
 therefore, of the Strictness of the Rule  
 we are to walk by, and of the Hard-  
 ships, which in our Christian Warfare  
 we are to undergo. The Rule is strict  
 indeed; but then, as there are Great  
 Helps and Assistances, enabling us to  
 live up to it; so great Abatements and  
 Allowances (we see) are made to us  
 at last, if we do not. There are in-  
 deed difficulties to be undergone: But,  
 surely, the *Labour of Love* is none of  
 them. That, as it makes a kind of A-  
 tonement to God for all the Faults we  
 commit, so doth it make an Amends to  
 Us for all the Troubles we are at, in  
 every other Part of our Duty; It gives  
 an easiness to that Yoke, and a Light-  
 ness to that Burden which is laid upon  
 us.

4<sup>thly</sup>, and *Lastly*, If the Doctrine laid S E R M.  
 down be good, then have we in it the 11.  
 plainest and most quickning Motive in   
 the World to the Exercise of this great  
 Duty of Charity; such a Motive, as ex-  
 ceeds the United Force of all the Argu-  
 ments which ever were offered in this  
 Case; and of whose Power if a Man  
 can be insensible, all Other Motives will  
 doubtless be lost upon him. The wise  
 Son of *Syrach* thought he had made a  
 reasonable Plea for Charity, when he  
 said, *Lay up Thy Treasure according to* Eccius.  
*the Commandments of the most High,* XXIX. 11,  
*and it shall bring the more Profit than* 12, 13.  
*Gold. Shut up Alms in thy Storehouses,*  
*and it shall deliver Thee from All Af-*  
*liction; It shall fight for Thee against*  
*Thine Enemies better than a mighty*  
*Shield, or a strong Spear.* But how Flat,  
 and Cold, and Unmoving is all this, when  
 compared with the Life and Energy that  
 is in those Few Words; --- *It shall Cover*  
*the multitude of Sins!*

This Motive indeed hath been carry'd  
 too far, and abus'd to ill Purposes by

S E R M. Men of another Communion, who, by  
 II. the help of it, have made the most Impure and Profligate Wretches hope for a General Forgiveness of all their Sins, so They were but Liberal enough to the Church in their Wills; and settled such a Revenue upon it, as should make a Good Number of Fathers think it worth their while to say *Daily Masses* for the Soul of the Departed. And how gross a way soever This is of Expounding the Text, it hath prov'd a very gainful one to those who made use of it; For perhaps half the Wealth of the Church of *Rome* may justly be attributed to it. A strong Persuasion of the Truth of this Exposition seems to have been one of the chief Foundation-stones, upon which a Great Part of Her Charitable Buildings have been Erected.

The Ministers of the Reform'd Church, indeed, dare not go so far in inviting you to Works of Charity and Mercy: But This they dare, and do affirm; That a true Principle of Charity, is that *Qualification* of Mind, which of all others  
 is

is most grateful and acceptable to God ; S E R M.  
 and such as, at the Day of final Retribution, He will have a particular Regard 11.  
 to, so as to make no severe Scrutiny into that Man's Faults and Failings, who hath Eminently guided his Life and Practice by it. And this they think sufficiently intimated in our Saviour's Account of the Process of that Day ; where the Only Head of Enquiry he mentions, is what Good and Charitable Deeds we have done to any of our Poor Brethren ? Which implies thus much at least ; That This will be the Chief Point upon which we shall be examin'd ; and that Our Acquittal, as to Neglects in Other Parts of Our Duty, will depend very much upon Our being able to give a good Answer to it.

And, I hope this Assurance itself is a sufficient Encouragement to the Practice of Charity, without Our needing to strain the Words of the Text to so Extravagant a Sense, as no Wise Man can believe that we *ought*, and no good Man would wish that we *might*, take them in.



S E R M. There is indeed one farther Sense of  
 11. the Words, than hath yet been mention'd ;  
 ~~~~~ to which they may, however, be inno-  
 cently and truly extended. They have  
 been hitherto consider'd only as con-  
 taining a particular Promise to Particu-  
 lar Persons : They may be understood  
 also with regard to those Blessings which  
 Publick Charities procure on Publick  
 States and Communities. For it is true  
 also, that Acts of Charity shall Cover  
 the Sins of Cities and Kingdoms, as well  
 as those of Private Men, if Cities and  
 Kingdoms do generally agree to perform  
 them.

Our Fore-fathers, we may presume,  
 were of This Opinion ; and were power-  
 fully influenc'd by it, towards setting for-  
 ward those Charitable Designs, which are  
 a Lasting Honour and Advantage to this  
 City and Kingdom. They could not but  
 see, that the Wealth of the Church, tho'  
 it was really grown too Great, and was  
 by some Rich Lazy Orders in it scanda-  
 lously employ'd ; yet had been retrench'd,  
 on


on this Account, *beyond* what needed, and S E R M.  
 had not been applied afterwards to any 11.  
 Religious, or Publick Use: but was squander'd away for the most part upon Favourites, and upon such as fell in with the Honest Zeal of our first Reformers, not out of any Principle of Conscience, but the mere Design of enriching Themselves out of the Plunder of Abbies and Monasteries. The Sense of this, doubtless, affected deeply the Good and Pious Men of those Times; and made them very Earnest and Active to procure some part of these *Church Spoils* to be set aside for Charitable Uses: That Retribution, as it were, might, by this Means, be made to God, of what had been torn away in too Large Proportions from his Worship and Service: To speak plainly, — that by a true Spirit of Charity those Sins might be *Cover'd*, which a Spirit of Lust and Avarice, under the Pretence of reforming the Abuses of Charity, had *caus'd*!

And these Endeavours of theirs God blest so wonderfully, that some Milli-

SERMONS of Money were, in a few Years, con-

II. tributed towards erecting and endowing  
 ~~~~~ Here, and in other Parts of our Country,  
 Hospitals and Houses of Charity. This  
 sufficiently baffled the Calumnies, and  
 stopp'd the Mouths of our Adversaries of  
 the Church of *Rome*, who cried us down,  
 as Men that were Reforming away Good  
 Works, and turning all Religion into a  
 Notional Faith. How other Protestant  
 Countries have freed Themselves from  
 that Imputation, I am not able to say:  
 Sure I am, Ours clear'd itself so well  
 from it, as to turn the Edge of the Ob-  
 jection back upon the Church of *Rome*  
 itself. For upon a Fair and Impartial  
 Computation, it appears, that there were  
 Greater Expences upon Publick Works  
 of Charity (such, I mean, as we are at  
 present discoursing of) in Sixty Years  
 after the Reformation, than had been in  
 Five times that Number of Years, while  
 Popery stood: Some have added, —  
 than there were from the *Conquest* down  
 to King *Edward the Sixth*; that Good  
 and Excellent Prince, the Great Promo-


ter

ter and Encourager of these Works; and SERM.  
 Who is not to be mention'd, without par- II.  
 ticular Honour, in This House, which   
 acknowledges him for Her Pious and Mu-  
 nificent Founder.


I cannot but observe to You, here, that it was the Ruling Part of This Great City, with a good Bishop of *London*, and Martyr for the Protestant Religion, at the Head of them, that by their United Application, stirr'd up that Young Prince to undertake so publick-spirited a Design. And it is Natural for me also at the same Time to wish, that That Honourable Body may thus heartily always continue to join Their Endeavours and Interests with those of Their *Right Reverend Diocesan*, in promoting Publick Charities, and Publick Blessings of any kind, either in Church, or State.

Indeed, it must always be remember'd, to the Honour of This Great Body, That, as her Foundations of Charity are larger, for ought I can find, than those of any Other City in the Christian World; so they were All rais'd or endow'd, ei-

S E R M. ther directly by Her own Members; or

11.  if by Other Hands, yet at Her earnest and importunate Suit: So that the Fabricks, and Revenues of this Kind, that belong to Her, are not only (as in Other Parts) the Useful Ornaments of the Place, but so many standing Monuments also of the Great Piety, and Unparallel'd Bounty of Her Ancestors; who solicited the Cause of the Poor and the Infirm, the Lame and Wounded, the Vagrant and Lunatick, with such a particular Industry and Zeal, as had those Great and Blessed Effects, which we at this Day see and feel. A Zeal, never to be forgotten by Men! and which, we hope, God also will never forget! But, when he comes down to Visit this City for the many Ill Effects of Wealth misapplied, will for the sake of it, Visit in Mercy; and consider the *Multitude of her Charities*, as well as That of Her *Sins*; Graciously allowing the One to be in some measure a *Cover* to the Other!

But I have not Room to speak severally of all the Great Benefactions with  
which

which She abounds; and am call'd upon, SERM.  
 by the Occasion of this Present Assembly, II.  
 to say somewhat more particularly of   
 those of This Place.

I think it, by no means, a fit and decent thing to vie Charities, and to erect the Reputation of One upon the Ruins of another: This is, for the sake of Charity to forget the True Character, and Essential Properties of it; which are, as *St. Paul* tells us, *to be kind, and not to* 1 Cor. xiii.  
*envy, not to vaunt itself, or be puffed up,* 4<sup>th</sup> 5<sup>th</sup>  
*not to behave itself unseemly.* However, This, I think, I may say, with Modesty and Truth, to the Advantage of That Charity to which we belong; That, tho' the Bottom of Wealth, it stands upon, be not so Large as that of some Others, yet is it in the Design of it so Comprehensive and Full, as not any where, I think, to be parallel'd.

Here are Supplies to Outward Want and Necessity liberally imparted; The Poor and Fatherless, not only taken Care of, but so bred up, as to be useful to the Common-wealth, and perhaps to take  
care

SERM. care of many others. Here Idle, and

II. Useless, (and therefore Necessitous) Persons are taught the Best of Lessons, Labour; inur'd to it, and made acquainted with it; and then sent out with such a Stock of Industry, as will do them more real Service than any Other kind of Benefaction, if They will but make use of it, and improve it.

Here, Loose Men and Women are reduc'd by wholesome Discipline, and Vagrants by Confinement: Punishment itself is made an Instrument of Mercy and Goodness, and, as Meat is provided for the Belly, so is there *a Rod for the Back of Fools*. These Particular Instances of Charity deserve to be enlarg'd on: It is an Argument that hath not yet been handled in its utmost Extent, and may perhaps ask Your Patience, on some Other Occasion: But the Time to which I am confin'd, is now almost run out; and there are yet Other Instances behind, to be insisted on. For

Here, not only External Necessities are relieved, but Inward Wants also are supply'd;

supply'd ; not Ill Manners only are outwardly corrected, but Ill Dispositions also are better'd, Ill Minds reform'd. S E R M. II.

And every single Instance in this kind is not confin'd to the Person who receives the Benefit, but is a real Service to a whole Community. It puts a Stop to a spreading Plague ; nay, it gets Ground upon it, by making Those, who have had the Infection, turn Physicians to Others, by their Example, and Future Good Manners.

Nay, Here, Men recover their Understandings as well as their Virtues ; that is, they recover their Very Selves : and are made once again Members of the Rational Creation, able to See and Know their Duty, and to Guide themselves by that Knowledge of it ; to pay their *Reasonable Service* to God, and to maintain a Civil Intercourse with Men.

And on this Occasion, that *Worthy and Learned Person* deserves a Particular and Grateful Mention, who hath, by his Eminent Skill, assisted the Hospital



SERM. tal to be Charitable in This Way, to  
 II. much greater Numbers of *Lunatics*,  
 ~~~~~ than have been known to be Cured in  
 Former Times.

So that this Great Receptacle of Miserable Objects of every kind, seems to be like that Medicinal Pool at *Bethesda*, where there were Virtues proper for every Malady; all Infirmities were equally heal'd, in Those, who had the Happiness to get into it. I can carry the Parallel no farther, I thank God. — For the Prudence and Vigilance of its Governors, as it hitherto *bath*, so, I question not, always *will* take Care, that (Contrary to what happened to the Impotent Man in that Story) They who have most need of the Pool, shall ever have the Happiness to get first into it. Impartiality is the Soul of Mercy, as well as Justice; and adds Farther Degrees of Use and Beauty to the most Useful and Beautiful Thing in the World.

To give You, therefore, in Little, the true Character of this great Benefaction; As Charity compriseth almost all  
 Kinds

Kinds of Virtues; so doth This Foundation take in almost all Sorts of Charities! S E R M.  
11.

But though all the Chief Kinds of Beneficence are her pursu'd, yet many Miserable Objects in Each Kind are not possible to be reach'd, with the present Stock of Charity, which belongs either to this Hospital, or to all Her Other Rivals in This *Labour of Love*. God open the Hands of the Rich, and direct the Hearts of the Merciful, to build upon the Foundation Their Forefathers have laid; and to supply what is wanting, to complete their Designs! Approving Themselves thus, the true Heirs of Their Piety and Bounty, as well as of their Wealth! Else these Great Buildings and Endowments of a former Age, like the Virtuous Acts and Atchievements of the first Founders of Noble Families, will become a Reproach, rather than be an Honour, to a Degenerate and Worthless Posterity.

Consider with Your Selves, how God hath blest this City for the sake of the  
mighty

S E R M. mighty Works that have been done in

11. Her; I say, for the *sake* of them. — For  
 ~~~~~ let a Man carry his Thoughts back to  
 that Time, when these Good Designs were  
 first set on foot, and he shall find, that  
 from thence the Rise and Growth of this  
 City in Trade, Wealth, Interest, and  
 Greatness, is precisely to be dated.

May it grow on, in the same Proportion! and by the same Means also! That is, may there still be found such a Number of Charitable Persons in it, as will continue the Character which hath hitherto belong'd to it; and by That means, secure the Continuation of God's Blessings upon it. May Charity go on *to have its perfect Work*; not Living merely upon the Old Stock, not continuing at a stay; but Growing and Increasing still, as the Necessities of some Men increase, and the Abilities of Others to Relieve them! And thus spreading itself to a wider Compass, it shall assuredly procure a Greater Share of God's Mercies, and *Cover* a greater *Multitude of our Sins*.

*That*

to Cover Sin.

87

*That this may be the Case, the Good and* SERM.

*Merciful God grant, through the Great* II.

*Steward and Dispenser of his Mercies,*

*Christ the Righteous! To whom, with*

*the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be*

*ascrib'd, as is most due, all Honour,*

*Adoration, and Praise, Now, and*

*Ever! Amen!*

---

*The*

---

*The Miraculous Propagation of the Gospel.*

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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

Q U E E N

A T

*WHITE-HALL,*


*October 21, 1694.*

---

ISAIAH lx. 22.

*A Little one shall become a Thousand, and  
a Small one a strong Nation: I, the  
Lord, will hasten it, in His Time.*

SERM. THE Evangelic Prophet is very par-  
III. ticular, throughout this Chapter,  
in describing the sudden and mighty In-  
crease of Christianity, its triumphant Pro-  
gress

gress thro' all Nations, and its Prevalence SERM.  
 over all the other Religions of the World. III.  
 And this wondrous Enlargement of it he   
 takes occasion (at the Close of the Chapter) to represent as so much the more Admirable, on the account of that Small Appearance it should make at first, those Slender and Unpromising Beginnings, with which it should set out. *A little one*, says he, in the Words I have read to you, *shall become a Thousand; and a Small one a strong Nation: I, the Lord, will hasten it, in His* (i. e. in the Messiah's) *time*. From which Words, therefore, I shall, without farther Preface, take occasion to raise these several Heads of Discourse.

*First*, I shall briefly represent to You I. the *Matter of Fact* itself, to which this Prophecy refers, how *swift* and *strange* a *Progress the Gospel* made at, and after its first setting out from *Jerusalem*.

*Secondly*, I shall prove to you, that this II. *Success* of it *must* have been *Miraculous*,  
 VOL. I. G and

S E R M. and owing chiefly to the mighty Opera-

III. tions, and effectual Assistances of the Holy Spirit of God. After establishing which great Truth upon firm and proper Arguments, I shall, in the

III. *Third* place, fairly lay together what can be offer'd to evade the Force of them; and give the several *Objections* their *Answers*.

IV. *Fourthly*, I shall consider, How Great and how distinguishing an *Advantage* this was to the *Christian Institution*, and to what *Useful Ends* and *Purposes* the Consideration of it may be apply'd.

V. *Fifthly*, and *Lastly*, I shall enquire into the Time *when*, and the Manner *how*, this *Miracle ceas'd*; and make some suitable Reflections upon it, with regard, both to Those who liv'd Then, when this Stop was put to the Gospel, and to Us, who live Now, in the latter Ages of the World.

First, I am to represent to You the SERM.  
*Matter of Fact* it self, to which the Pro- III.  
 phesy of the Text refers; how *swift* and  
*strange* a *Progress* the Gospel really made  
 at, and after its first setting out from  
*Jerusalem*. And the Account of this is  
 as much above Imagination, as it is be-  
 yond Dispute.

From St. *Luke* we learn, that, upon the  
 Ascent of Our Saviour, the *little Flock*,  
 He had gather'd, consisted of but *One hun-*  
*dred and twenty* Disciples: These receiv'd  
 a mighty Addition to their Number, on  
 the very Day of Pentecost (the Day, on  
 which the Gospel, as well as the Law,  
 was first *promulg'd*) even on That Day  
*Three Thousand souls* were brought over  
 to the Faith, by a Sermon of St. *Peter's*:  
 so well did that Spiritual Fisher begin to  
 make good the Character, which Christ  
 had given of him, that *he should catch Men!*  
 After this, *the number of the Disciples mul-* Acts vi. 7.  
*tiplied in Jerusalem greatly*, saith the same  
 holy Pen, (greatly, even in proportion to  
 G 2 their



S E R M. their first Increase :) and from thence the

III. Doctrine was soon carried into all the Remoter Regions of the Earth; insomuch that the Book of the *Apostles Acts* (which being written by St. *Luke*, the Companion of St. *Paul*, is chiefly taken up in giving an Account of that particular Apostle's Labours, and Travels; and of those of them only, which he underwent in the First Years of his Ministry: I say, even this Book itself) doth contain an Account of the spreading of the Gospel, forwards, thro' many Eastern Countries; and, backwards, through a great part of the West: of its piercing, on the one side into all the Civiliz'd, and some of the Barbarous Provinces of *Asia*; and, on the other, as far as the great Metropolis of *Europe*, *Rome* itself; *so mightily grew the Word of God, and prevailed!*

Acts xix.  
20.

Indeed, the Writers of the Story of the Church do with one Consent agree, that *Scythia*, *India*, *Gaul*, and *Egypt*, all the most distant Parts of the World Then known had the Doctrine of Christ convey'd to them in less than forty Years,


*s. c.*

i. e. before the Destruction of the Jewish State by Titus. SERM.  
III.

And what Degree of Success the Voice of these Preachers had in the several Countries, thro' which it sounded, we may learn from the Ancient Apologists, who, ere Two Centuries were as yet run out, pleaded for Christianity, on the account of its vast and incredible Numbers: represented to the Heathen Emperors, that their Courts, their Camps, their Cities, their Provinces, were all full of them, and that it was impossible to extirpate them, without destroying the far Greater Part of their Subjects.


The Gospel is frequently in the New Testament compared to *Light*: and it did in nothing more resemble Light than in This, that, as soon as the Heavenly Doctrine, therein contain'd, arose upon the World, it darted its bright Rays, and diffus'd its quickning Influence from East to West, with an inconceivable Swift-  
ness. This Kingdom of God came not with Observation, neither could Men say, *Lo* Luke xvii.  
20, 21.  
*Here, and Lo there!* That is, (as we

SERM. may interpret the Words) it did not

III. establish itself like other Kingdoms, in  
 a slow and leisurely manner, so as that  
 Lookers-on might trace it easily from  
 its Rise through the several Steps of its  
 Progress; but fix'd itself at once almost  
 every where, with so rapid and amazing  
 a Course, as did, as it were, leave the  
 Eyes and Observation of Men behind it.  
 And still, as it went along, it gain'd  
 mighty Spoils from all Religions, and  
 gather'd vast Multitudes of every Coun-  
 try under its Banners. And, therefore,  
 well did the Founder of this Kingdom

Luke xiii. thus prophesy concerning it: --- *Unto*  
 18, 19, *what is the Kingdom of God like? And*  
 20, 21. *whereunto shall I resemble it? It is like*  
*a Grain of Mustard-Seed, which a Man*  
*took, and threw into his Garden; and it*  
*grew, and waxed a great Tree: and the*  
*Fowls of the Air lodged in the Branches*  
*of it. And again, he said, Whereunto*  
*shall I liken the Kingdom of God? It is*  
*like Leaven, which a Woman took, and*  
*hid in three Measures of Meal, until the*  
*Whole was leavened.*

But

But because the Matter of Fact itself, S E R M.  
 [That there was such a sudden and prodigious Increase of Converts to Christianity] is on all Hands so well agreed upon, as to need no solemn Proof: it may suffice to have given this short Account of it. III. 


I go on now, in the *Second Place*, to II.  
 prove, that this Success of the *Gospel* was certainly *miraculous*, and owing chiefly to the mighty Operations, and effectual Assistances of the Holy Spirit of God: and that, for this plain Reason; because the *Natural* and Visible Causes, which concurr'd to the Production of this great Effect, were not any ways Equal to the Effect produc'd; and, therefore, some *Supernatural* and invisible Cause must needs have given Birth to it.

The *Appearing* Causes and Instruments of this Wondrous Revolution were, chiefly, Twelve Men, of obscure Birth and Parentage, of the meanest Education, of the plainest and simplest Understandings, unpolish'd by Learning and Eloquence,

S E R M. unimprov'd by Experience and Converſe ;

III. Men of no Subtlety, no Art, no Addreſs ;  
 who had no manner of Authority, Inter-  
 eſt, or Repute in the World: Theſe  
 Men undertake to convince the World,  
 that one *Jeſus*, a Man, who had juſt  
 before expir'd publickly on a Croſs,  
 was the true God, bleſſed for ever ; and,  
 in Conſequence of this, to preach up  
 a Doctrine, the moſt unwelcome to  
 Fleſh and Blood that could be, the  
 moſt repugnant to Men's natural De-  
 ſires and Inclinations, to their ſettled  
 Habits, and inveterate Prejudices ; con-  
 trary to the Eſtabliſh'd Rites and Religi-  
 ons of all Countries, and in all Ages of  
 the World. They ſet out from *Jeruſalem*,  
 with this Deſign ; they diſperſe themſelves  
 thro' all the Quarters of the Earth ; they  
 ſucceed every where : and, in a very ſhort  
 time, prevail with great Multitudes, in  
 every Nation, and Kingdom, to ſubmit  
 to the Laws, and to own the Religion of  
*Jeſus*.

Now, I ſay, here was no manner of Pro-  
 portion between the Cauſe and its Effect ;  
 between

between the Work which was wrought, S E R M.  
 and the Instruments which wrought it: III.  
 and therefore we may, and must from   
 hence conclude, that a Divine Invisible  
 Power went along with them in every  
 Step, and *miraculously* bless'd their Endeavours. Which Truth, that it may appear  
 to you in its full Strength and Evidence,  
 I shall consider more particularly, which  
 (naturally speaking) are the best Advan-  
 tages for a New Opinion to set up with,  
 and under what Circumstances it is most  
 likely to prevail; and I shall shew, that  
 the Christian Religion was utterly desti-  
 tute of Every One of these Advantages,  
 and yet, nevertheless, *did* prevail.

Now there are *four* Things, that  
 chiefly conduce towards the spreading of  
 any new Doctrine, and most remark-  
 ably make way for its Reception in the  
 World.

As, *1<sup>st</sup>*, If the *Principles* of it be suited  
 to the *Lusts*, the *Interests*, and *Wishes*  
 of Those, among whom it is to be pro-  
 pagated.

S E R M.

2dly, If it be *supported* and *countenanced* by Persons in Power and *Authority*, of great *Name* and *Note*, if it be either forcibly obtruded upon Men by Sanguinary Laws and Edicts, or more indirectly advanc'd by Art and Management, and the Methods of worldly Prudence.

III.



3dly, If it be first brought into the World in *dark* and *barbarous Ages*, when Men are either too Rude and Illiterate, to be Able to weigh, and dispute the Truth of it, or too much sunk in Sloth and Vice, to be Willing to do it. Or,

4thly, If it be not proposed to Men, all *at once*, but be insinuated into them by *Degrees*, Secretly, and Insensibly.

1. As to the *First* of these, it is certain, that nothing recommends a new Doctrine so much, or goes so far towards promoting an Universal Reception of it, as its falling in with the corrupt Desires and Inclinations, the Passions and Prejudices of Men. For Men are, without Difficulty, brought to believe an Opinion true, which they wish true beforehand, And this was the Way in which that  
cunning

cunning Impostor, *Mabomet*, set up for a new Prophet. He made his Doctrine as relishing and palatable as he could; contriv'd it on purpose, so as that it might gratify Mens Lusts and Appetites; and, especially, that it might comply with the loose and wanton Manners of the *East*, where he erected his Standard.

S E R M.  
III.

And thus also, ever since, hath Libertinism of all kinds promoted its Interest, and increas'd its Party. False and foolish Opinions have gotten footing, and thriven, in prejudice to true Religion, and sound Morality; because there was something in them, which flatter'd either our Vanity, our Lust, or our Pride, and fell in with a darling Inclination. And to this single Art Mr. *Hobbs* ow'd all his Reputation, and his Followers: it was not his Philosophy, and his boasted Reason, that drew Men in; but the Skill he had in fitting his Principles to Men's Constitutions, and Tempers: He knew what would take, and be lik'd; and he knew how to express it after a taking manner; and no wonder




SERM. wonder then, if it were greedily enter-

tain'd. To talk against receiv'd Opinions,  
 and in behalf of some belov'd Vices, and  
 Frailties; to dress up his Discourse in all  
 the natural Beauties of Language, and  
 to give it beside the Air (and he gave it  
 nothing but the Air) of Demonstration;  
 This, he saw, would be a sure way of  
 engaging the Men of Wit and Pleasure  
 on his Side; and This, therefore, he fol-  
 low'd with Application and Success; like  
 one of the *Children of This World, who*  
*are, in their Generation, wiser than the*  
*Children of Light.*

Luke xvi.  
 8.

But Christianity, when it set out, took  
 none of these Methods of recommend-  
 ing itself, and enlarging its Interests:  
 on the contrary, it propos'd plain, naked  
 Truths, without Colours, and Disguises,  
 or any regard to what was Agreeable  
 and Pleasing. It held forth high and  
 inconceivable Mysteries, which the Pride  
 of Man would make him apt to sus-  
 pect, because he could not perfectly  
 comprehend; and it preach'd up harsh  
 and ungrateful Doctrines, which did Vio-  
 lence

lence to Men's Natures, and which it was S E R M.  
death to them to think of entertaining. III.  
And yet, I say, under this great Disad-   
vantage it made its way, and prosper'd.  
But,

*2dly*, It is another great Advantage to  
a rising Opinion, if it be espous'd by Men  
of Authority, Repute and Parts; who  
may either force its way into the World  
by Dint of Power, or bring it about by  
Arts of Management, and Contrivance.  
In this manner the Prophet of the East  
hew'd out his way by the Power of the  
Sword; took advantage from the Divi-  
sions and Weakness of Christendom, to  
arm a Savage Multitude, and make large  
Inroads upon it; and, having first brought  
into Subjection the Bodies of Men, had  
no hard Task, afterwards, to enslave their  
Souls.

In like manner the Papal Usurpations  
often prevail'd; the Bishops of *Rome* got  
Zealous Princes into their Interest, and  
made them blindly obedient to the Holy  
See; and then, by their Help, impos'd  
their own Decrees upon whole unwilling  
Provinces

SERM. Provinces and Kingdoms. And, as some

III. of their Encroachments thus got footing, so many others, we know, were brought in, at first, and have been supported ever since, by the highest and most refined Arts of Policy. That See hath never wanted, from the very Moment, since it first set up its Pretences, a number of skilful Managers, who have continually pleaded its Cause, and carried on its Interests, with all the Dexterity and Address, with all the Industry and Zeal, of which Human Wit is capable: It hath ever had the warmest and ablest, (I had almost said the wisest) Heads employ'd in its Defence; and hath taken care to make sure of them, by Bountiful Rewards, dealt out in proportion to their Services; and by making a Zeal for the Papal Chair, a sure and never-failing Step towards all manner of Honours and Advantages: and no wonder, therefore, if its Delusions have spread so far, and wide, and infected such Numbers.

It was much the same case, with regard to the Broachers of Heresy in the ancient

cient Church; they were generally leading Men, of some Figure and Repute in the World, of great Wit and Subtlety; and, by the Help of these, they were able to raise a Dust, and make a Noise; to form a Party, and set themselves at the Head of it.


S E R M.


III.




But now, when Christianity first appear'd, how weak and defenceless was it, how artless and undesigning! How utterly unsupported either by the Secular Arm, or Secular Wisdom! *I send you* Math x 16. *forth*, said our Saviour to his Apostles, *as Sheep in the midst of Wolves*: And, accordingly, they went forth, in the Spirit of Simplicity, of Humility, and Meekness; arm'd only with Truth, and Innocence; a good Cause, and an equal Resolution: *The Weapons of their Warfare were not Carnal, but Spiritual!* 2 Cor. x. 4. The Messengers of these glad Tidings were so far from having a Name in the World, that they were contemptible: were scorned as *Jews*, by the rest of Mankind; and as the meanest and lowest of *Jews*, by the *Jews* themselves; and were not likely,

SER M. likely, therefore, to credit the high Em-

III. bassy, on which they came. They left their Nets, and their Hooks, (the Only things probably, that they understood) to come into a New World, wherein they were perfect Strangers, and to preach a new Gospel, with which all Men were unacquainted: and they preached it, not to the *Wise*, the *Mighty*, or the *Noble*, who, when converted, might have forwarded its Reception by their Influence; but to the *Foolish*, *Weak*, and *Base*, who were able to do nothing for its Advantage, but by Living according to the Rules, and Dying for the Truth of it. As they had no Help from the Powers of this World, Civil or Military, so had they all the Opposition that was possible; which they withstood, and baffled: they sow'd the good Seed of the Word under the very Feet of the *Roman* Magistrates, and Soldiers, who, though they trod it down, and rooted it up, yet could not destroy it so far, but that still it sprang out again, and yielded a fruitful and glorious Harvest. A

3d. Thing, that promotes the Progress SERM.  
of a New Religion, is, if it be brought III.  
into the World, in Dark and Barbarous   
Times; when Men are either too Rude  
and Illiterate, to be able to weigh, and  
to dispute the Truth of it, or too much  
funk in Sloth and Vice, to be Willing  
to do it. And this, again, cannot but  
put us in Mind of the *Romish* Supersti-  
tions: for it is plain, that they took That  
time of settling and spreading their Em-  
pire, which, of all times since the Coming  
of *Christ*, was the most Ignorant, and  
the least Inquisitive; when Men were  
Vicious, Lazy, Dispirited, Fearful, and  
Credulous; when gross Darknefs sate  
upon the Face of the West; when the  
Irruptions of the *Goths* and *Vandals* had  
destroy'd all the Old Learning, as well  
as the Old Buildings, and left nothing  
but Ignorance and Barbarity behind them.  
Then, in that *Night*, as the Parable  
speaks, did the cunning *Enemy* come,  
and sow his *Tares*, when there was no  
body at Work, or awake to observe him.  
And, when he had thus covertly sown

serm. them, what Wonder was it, that they

III. should grow up together with the Corn,  
 and Flourish?

But did the Gospel make such Advantages as these, of Mens Credulity, and Supinencs? No, it took all ways of being Try'd and Examin'd to the uttermost. It alarm'd the World a good while before-hand, and gave fair Warning of its Approach, by plain Signs, and Predictions: and if the Prophecies of the Old Testament will not be admitted as Proofs in this case, sure *Tacitus* and *Virgil* may be heard; the first of which lays it down as a known Truth, that there was (about the Time of our Saviour) a strong Tradition, thro' all the *East*, of a certain mighty Prince, that was then, and there expected to arise, and to govern the World; and the Latter, out of the *Sibylline Verses*, transcrib'd such an Account of things, as did evidently, and could only belong to the Days of the Gospel, and the Reign of the Messiah.

But the most Observeable thing on this Head, is, that God pitch'd upon that

particular Point of Time, for the Manifestation of his Gospel, when good Sense, and Learning, and Wit, were at the highest; when the *Roman* Empire was in its full Glory, and, together with it, all the Arts and Sciences flourish'd: when the World enjoy'd a profound Peace, and was at Liberty to examine the Truth of an Opinion, which set up with such Pretences: Then did the Glorious Light of the Gospel shine forth, and dazzle the Eyes even of Those, who were thought to see best, and farthest. And soon afterwards the Apostles open'd their Heavenly Commission, and executed it publickly; challenging those who look'd on, with all their Curiosity, Subtlety, and Spite, to disprove, or blemish it. The Doctrine of the Cross shew'd itself barefac'd to all the Wits and Sages of both *Rome* and *Athens*; and defy'd their Doubts, and their Reasonings. And yet, under These discouraging Circumstances also, it took Root downwards, and brought forth Fruit upwards, speedily, and abundantly. A


S E R M.  
III.  
~



SERM. 4<sup>th</sup> Help towards establishing any

III. New Opinions in Religion is, if they be  
 not propos'd to Men all at Once, but  
 insinuated into them only by insensible  
 Steps and Degrees: and this Method hath  
 often made way for the Belief of the most  
 monstrous Doctrines, and the Entertainment  
 of the wildest Absurdities. Witness  
 [once more] several Articles in the *Roman  
 Catholick* Faith; which, had they been  
 offer'd to the Minds of Men, at first, in  
 their full Latitude, had been reject'd with  
 Indignation and Horror; but being pro-  
 pos'd at half Views, and advanc'd by little  
 and little, were also gradually admitted  
 by Men, not well aware of their Ut-  
 most Import and Tendency: every first  
 Step into Error smoothing the Way to-  
 ward a second, and so on, till the Pas-  
 sage was widen'd enough for the Grosslest  
 Contradictions to enter in at it.

Far from this Artificial Method of  
 winning Belief, was the Religion of *Je-  
 sus*: Upon its first Appearance, after the  
 Descent of the Holy Ghost, it offer'd it-  
 self to the View of Men, at full length,  
 and

and in all its Proportions. No Moral SERM.  
Precept was reserv'd for a more Conve- 111.  
nient Time, no Doctrine (no Great, Fun-   
damental Doctrine) was disguis'd, or  
conceal'd. The Message it brought, it  
deliver'd, plainly and openly, at once;  
the most unwelcome Practical Truths,  
as well as Those, which were better  
Known, and receiv'd; the Sublimest  
Points of Faith, together with such as  
were more Easy and Credible.

The Primitive Apostles did not, like  
those of a Latter Date, the Fathers of the  
Mission of *China*, preach up first a *Glori-  
fy'd*, and then a *Crucify'd* Saviour; but  
bore the Scandal of the Cross whereso-  
ever, and to whomsoever they open'd  
the Doctrines of it: The *slaying* of *Je-  
sus*, and his being *hang'd on a Tree*, is Acts v. 30.  
mention'd in one of the first Sermons of  
St. *Peter*. This (humanly speaking) was  
an Unlikely way of gaining Profelytes;  
and yet, as unlikely a Way as it was, Thus  
were innumerable Profelytes gain'd.

Let us lay together what hath been  
said:—The Gospel of *Christ*, at its

SERM. Earliest Appearance, had all the Probabi-

III. lities in the World against its Success:  
~~~~~ for it was possess'd scarce of any One of those Advantages, which do most signally recommend a new Doctrine, and make it thrive. It had no complying Tenets, to sooth Mens Appetites and Passions! but was all Harsh and Austere. It had no Encouragement, no Protection from the Civil Power; no Force, or Cunning to uphold it, no Men of Eminence, and Esteem to engage on its Side. The Age, which was pitch'd upon for the Discovery of it, was more discerning and enlightned, more curious and inquisitive, than, perhaps, any that either preceded or follow'd it: and therefore the Success of this Doctrine could not be owing to Mens Ignorance or Supineness. Finally, its Promulgers deliver'd it not out by Parcels, as is the Way of Cunning and Designing Men; but offer'd the Whole of it to be all together examined, and compared. Nevertheless, though press'd with All These Clogs and Incumbrances, it sprang forth, and made its Way into the  
the


the World, by a swift and incredible S E R M.  
Progress. III.

The Inference from hence is plain and indubitable; That a Divine Power and Virtue certainly went along with it, to supply what was Wanting to it, upon Other Accounts; and that its *Increase* must needs have been *Supernatural*, and *Miraculous*: so that, were we acquainted with nothing more, concerning the Apostles, than what the Four Evangelists have left us; were the Book of their *Acts* lost, and, together with it, an Account of the wondrous Effusion of the Holy Spirit upon them, at the Day of Pentecost; and of the mighty Signs and Wonders, which they afterwards perform'd, in Virtue of that Unction: I say, were we in the Dark to all these Transactions, which declare the Christian Religion to have been *propagated* by *Miracle*; yet still every Considering Man must think, that there was somewhat *Miraculous* in it. Such an Increase, from such Beginnings; such a wonderful Revolution, brought about

SERM. by such weak and disproportion'd In-


III. struments; is itself a *Miracle*, and the  
 ~~~~~ greatest of Miracles; and doth as evident-  
 ly assure us, that the Preaching of the  
 1 Cor. ii. Apostles was in the *Demonstration of the*  
 4- *Spirit, and of Power*, as if we had heard  
 them speaking Strange Tongues, seen  
 them healing the Blind and Lame, and  
 reviving the Dead.

III. In which Truth, that we may be yet  
 farther confirm'd, let us consider (as I  
 propos'd in the *Third Place*,) what *Shifts*  
 the Enemies of the Gospel make use of,  
 to evade the Force of this pressing Argu-  
 ment. And the utmost that any of them  
 pretend to say, is, as follows: 'Tis true,  
 they will own, Christians multiply'd very  
 fast, and the Increase of them was, in  
 some Sense, *Miraculous*: That is, it was  
*wonderful*; as every Unusual Thing is  
 to Those, who do not know, or consider  
 the Causes of it. But to a Man, they  
 say, who dares to go out of the Common  
 Road, and to think for himself, it will ap-  
 pear, that there was at that time a Set  
 of

of *Natural* Causes on foot, sufficient S E R M.  
to account for this Effect, without any 111.  
recourse to a *Divine* and *Supernatural*   
Agent. The Apostles indeed were twelve  
plain Illiterate Men, who had not, of  
Themselves, Force, or Skill enough, to  
bring about such an Event: but their  
Natural Inability was supply'd by a favour-  
able Juncture, by an happy Coincidence  
of such conspiring Causes, and Acci-  
dental Advantages, as mightily help'd on  
the Work. For Example,

The *Sufferings* of those poor bigotted  
Creatures, the *Martyrs*, made mighty  
Impressions upon Men; especially upon  
those of the same Rank with the Suf-  
ferers, the Common People; who never  
fail to take the side of the Oppress'd, and  
to think That Cause good (let it be what  
it will) for the Profession of which Men  
are us'd ill. Then, the *Purity of the Chri-  
stian Morals* was a mighty Argument to  
bring the Men of Probity and Virtue in-  
to the Interests of the Gospel. And so like-  
wise was the *Analogy* of some of its *Mysti-  
cal Truths*, to the *Doctrines* of *Plato*,  
(then

SERM. (then in great Esteem and Vogue) a very

III.  good Bait to the Men of Philosophy, and Learning. The *Distribution* of Goods, which the first Christians made, and their Living together in Common, was a good Reason for many Mens embracing that Faith, which, they were sure, would maintain them. The Casual *Cessation* of *Oracles* was immediately turn'd to the Advantage of the Religion of *Christ*, as if *That* had procur'd it. And the *Destruction* of the *Jewish State* contributed greatly to the Increase of the Christian Numbers; because it seem'd to have been foretold by the Founder of their Faith: and therefore, luckily coming to pass about that time, rais'd an high Opinion in Men of his Person, and Doctrine; and inclin'd them to think, that his Institution, then newly set up, was design'd by God to succeed in the Room of the *Jewish Establishment*, which, about the same time, happen'd to be pull'd down. In the mean while, the *Rulers* of the World overlook'd, and neglected to crush, a Doctrine, which was so harmless in itself,  
and

and so unlikely to succeed, on the Account of its Abettors; till, thro' Their Connivance, it was at last Universally receiv'd among the Vulgar Sort, and the Number of its Votaries was grown so formidable, that even Princes themselves were forc'd, for their own Ease and Interest to come into it, and profess it.

And thus, say they, several extraordinary and unheeded Advantages concurring to favour the Growth of Christianity, it *grew* indeed *mightily*, and *prevail'd*; as a little River will swell high, and spread itself wide, and run far, when swoln by Casual Rains, and by many other Streams, which have emptied themselves at once into it. Such is the Account they pretend to give of the Rise and Progress of our Faith, from *second Causes*, without calling a *first*, to solve the Appearance.

In opposition to these Pretences, I will shew, that the Causes here assign'd, were utterly insufficient to produce the Event, for which they are assign'd: a short Review of them, I think, (and the Time will

SERM.

III.






SERM. will allow of but a short one) will easily

III. satisfy us concerning it.




The *Blood of the Martyrs* was, indeed, what it hath been often styl'd, the *Seed of the Church*: But how? Not, certainly, by alluring Men to the Profession of Christianity, at the Time *when* those Martyrs suffer'd; for nothing could have a greater Tendency to frighten and discourage Men from professing the Gospel, than to find, that they should be persecuted, and must die for it. This only is meant by that Saying, and thus far it holds good; That the Sufferings and Torments, which the first Christians underwent so willingly and bravely, were a strong Evidence of the Truth of that Doctrine, which could inspire its Followers with so much Courage, Constancy, and Patience; and dispos'd Men mightily to embrace the Religion of Christ *afterwards*, in better and more quiet Times. But before that this Motive could have any considerable Force and Influence, the Gospel had *already* spread

spread and settled itself every where: **SERM.**  
 and therefore nothing can well be ac- **III.**  
 counted for by it, but the Accession   
 which was made to Christianity, *after* it  
 was sufficiently establish'd; and This, we  
 are ready to confess, had nothing Extra-  
 ordinary in it, nor are we at present ma-  
 king any Enquiries concerning it.

The same Answer serves to disprove  
 that Other pretended Account of this In-  
 crease, drawn from the *Destruction of the*  
*Jewish State*. We allow it to have ad-  
 ded to the Numbers of Christian Con-  
 verts, *when* it happen'd; but it happen'd  
 not till near forty Years after the Death of  
*Christ*; and by that time, Christianity was  
 strong enough of itself, and needed no  
 Aids. And, even when this Event hap-  
 pen'd, tho' several *Jews* promoted the  
 Interests of the Gospel, by embracing the  
 Faith, yet the Obstinate Part of them,  
 which stood out, did it much more harm  
 than the Profelytes did it good. For the  
 uncomplying *Jews* were not satisfy'd  
 with rejecting Christianity themselves;  
 but

SERM. but made it their Business to render it  
 III. odious, suspected, and contemptible to  
 the Heathens also, in all the Corners  
 of the *Earth*, to which they were driven.

The *Purity of the Christian Morals*, and the answerable Lives of Christian Converts, did indeed very naturally lead Men to admire and value the Doctrine of Christ; but by no means, to come under the Yoke of it: for tho' Most Men have an Esteem for strict Rules, and strict Livers; yet Few care to practise the one, or to imitate the other. And nothing, I think, could be contriv'd so effectual, (next to the former wise Motive from the Sufferings of the Martyrs) to *deter* Men from Christianity, as to tell them, that, when they took it upon them, they must renounce their dearest Appetites, and Passions, and deny their very Selves. And I desire the Men, who raise these Objections against the Divine Original of the Gospel, to tell us fairly; Whether, if they had liv'd at that time, they would have come in upon *This* Principle?

ciple? I am sure, they would not; because S E R M.  
 it is *This* Principle alone, [that they must III.  
 part with their unlawful Satisfaction, and   
 Pleasures, if they do] which keeps them  
 out of it now. Therefore, neither can  
 This be any sufficient Reason for the sud-  
 den and wide Growth of Christianity.

The *Analogy of some mystical Truths*  
*in the Gospel to the Doctrine of Plato*,  
 is yet a weaker Plea. For this Motive is  
 calculated to touch but very few, only  
 the Philosophers of the *Academic School*.  
 And with such, it could have no Great  
 Weight, surely; or, at least, not enough  
 to over-balance that Scorn and Con-  
 tempt, with which, on other accounts,  
 they treated the Christian Religion, and  
 its Promulgers; That, for its short, Un-  
 philosophical way of proposing Truths,  
 without Demonstration, or Reasoning;  
 and Those, for their Ignorance, and the  
 Meanness of their Education. Accord-  
 ingly, we find not that the Sublime My-  
 steries of our Faith made any Impression  
 on these haughty Reasoners: St. *Paul*  
 was derided at *Athens*, when he propos'd  
 them;

SERM. them; nor can we certainly learn that  
 III. any one Philosopher, of Note, embrac'd  
 our Religion, till it had been for many  
 Years preached, and disseminated, and  
 had taken deep root in the World.

The *Casual Cessation of Oracles* (as 'tis call'd) about the Time of promulging the Gospel, was not Casual, but the direct and genuine Effect of it: and, we own, had Men understood it to be so Then, and imputed the Total Silence of those Oracles to its True Cause, such a Persuasion would have been very useful towards bringing in the Heathen World to the Acknowledgment of *Christ*. But we deny that they did at all understand, or allow it to be so. And for a plain Proof of this, we refer ourselves to that Celebrated Discourse in *Plutarch*, about the Reasons of this Cessation; where, among Many, which that Learn'd Man assigns for it, (vain Reasons indeed, and such as shew him to have been at a Loss for the True One!) This of the Coming of *Christ* is not mention'd, or hinted at: tho' he gives there such an Account  
 of

of things, that a Christian might easily prove, from what *He* relates, that it was really the Coming of Christ which effected it. But this is a Point of too important and nice a nature to be settled incidentally, and might well deserve to be consider'd in an entire Discourse.

S E R M.


III.

Again, neither can any probable Account be given of this matter, from the *Charitable Distribution of their Goods, which the first Christians made.* For, supposing that some of the poorer sort might be tempted by this Motive; yet, surely, those who had wherewithal to sustain themselves, and were easy in their Circumstances, did not come in upon it: It will not be said, I hope, that such as *made* this Distribution of their Goods (which will be found to have been an inconsiderable Number) came in themselves to *partake* of it. Nor could these Hopes have any Great Influence, even on the meaner sort; since there was something in the Christian Religion, of far more force to frighten them, than This was to allure them; the strict Rules

SERM. of Honesty and Temperance, according

III. to which they were bound to live, and  
 the great Calamities and Persecutions,  
 which they were sure to undergo.


*Lastly*, No Weight can be laid, in this Case, on that *Contempt*, which *Heathen Princes* are said to have had of the *Christian Religion*, and the little Care they, therefore, took to restrain it: for it is not true, that they stood by unconcerned at its Growth; on the contrary, it is certain, that they look'd upon it with a jealous Eye, from its first Rise; and the Early Persecutions of *Nero* (not to mention those of *Domitian*, which were after the Destruction of *Jerusalem*) shew, that he took great notice of it, and endeavour'd to Extirpate it. However, let the *Roman Emperors* have been never so regardless of its Increase; yet it is certain that they did no ways Countenance it; and that every one, who turn'd Christian, was sure by that means to forfeit the Favour of his Prince, and to be look'd upon as an Apostate from the Religion.

Religion of his Country. And how, S E R M.  
 even under such a Pressure as this, could III.  
 Christianity have made so rapid and   
 astonishing a Progress, if He, who is  
 mightier than the mightiest, had not  
 bid it *go forth and prosper* against all Hu-  
 man Discouragements? Had *this Coun-*  
*sel, or this Work been of Men*, it would,  
 even without any direct Opposition from  
 the Temporal Power, have certainly *come*  
*to nought*, as *Gamaliel* argu'd; but *being*  
*of God, nothing could overthrow it.*

I do not deny, after all, but that  
 Every one of these Particulars might,  
 in a natural way, contribute somewhat,  
 either to the Planting, or Spreading of  
 the Gospel. But I think it is evident,  
 from the short Hints I have suggested to  
 you, that All them together were not  
 able to do the thousandth Part of that  
 Work which is allotted to them. And,  
 therefore, to resolve this Great Event  
 into a *Conspiracy of second Causes*, as 'tis  
 call'd, without any regard to the *first*, is  
 an absurd and senseless Attempt; and  
 only shews us, how very strong an In-



SERM. cination and Biass there is in Some

III.  Minds towards Infidelity, which they can be brought to espouse upon so very slight Grounds.

A Man, who should see an Acorn put into the Earth, and perceive in a few Weeks, or Months, an Oak shooting up from it to a prodigious height, and spreading its Branches to an amazing Extent, so as to over-top the loftiest Mountains, and even to cover the whole Field where it grew; might as well say, that there was a strange *Conspiracy of Natural Causes*, an extraordinary Degree of Warmth, Moisture, and so forth, which concurr'd to produce this Effect; as affirm, that the vast Success of the Gospel was owing to those *petty Principles*, from whence Some Men pretend to derive it.

But it must be granted to them, that their thoughts are of a piece, and that this Opinion of theirs falls in with the rest of their System. For their Account of the *New Creation* by Jesus Christ, is much like that which they give of the  
*Old*

*Old one.* It was a Lucky Hit of concurring Causes which propagated Christianity. And it was a Lucky Hit also of dancing Atoms, which first made the World: and 'tis the same Lucky Hit, which still preserves and governs it too. They, who can bring themselves to believe the Latter of these Opinions, may, consistently enough, be suppos'd to entertain the Former: But, certainly, no other Creature, but an Atheist by Complexion, could ever take up with such pitiful Accounts of Things.

SERM.

III.



Well then, The Christian Religion, from small and weak Beginnings, spread itself far, and wide, after a sudden and strange Manner; and this it did, against all Probability, and contrary to all the Rules of Success, which all other Rising Opinions have ever set up with: It had no One of those great Advantages, some of which recommend every new Sect, that stands, and prevails: and, as for all other Lesser Helps, and Assistances towards its Increase, which the Wit of Man can assign; they are appar-

S E R M. rently too weak to sustain the Weight

III. that is laid on them. It remains, therefore, that this wondrous Effect sprang undoubtedly from the immediate Influence of the First Cause, actuating after an Extraordinary manner the Industry, and blessing the Endeavours of the Apostles; stirring up the Minds of Men to attend to, and disposing their Hearts to embrace the Truths of the Gospel; in a Word, accompanying all they said, and did, with mighty Signs and Wonders, with the *Demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power.*

I have fully consider'd *Three* of the *Five* Points, on which I intended to discourse; having represented to You,

*First*, The Matter of Fact itself to which the Prophecy of the Text refers; how swift and strange a Progress the Gospel really made, at, and after its first setting out from *Jerusalem*: Having prov'd to You,

*Secondly*, That this Success of it must have been *Miraculous*. After which I did, in the

*Third*

*Third Place*, fairly lay together what I thought might be offered to evade the Force of this Argument; and gave the several Objections their Answers. It remains that I should consider,

S E R M.  
111.  


*Fourthly*, How great and how distinguishing an Advantage this brings to the Christian Institution; and to what Useful Ends and Purposes the Consideration of it may be apply'd: And then,

*Lastly*, Enquire into the Time when, and the Manner how this Miracle ceas'd, and make some suitable Reflection upon it, with regard both to Those who liv'd Then, when this Stop was put to the Gospel, and to Us who live now in the Latter Ages of the World.

But the handling of these two Points must be the Work of a Second Discourse.

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## P A R T II.

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ISAIAH lx. 22.

*A Little one shall become a Thousand, and  
a Small one a strong Nation: I the  
Lord will hasten it in His Time.*

SERM. IV.  OF the *Five* Points which I propos'd, from these Words, to handle, *Three* have been consider'd: I come now, in the

*Fourth* place, to shew, How great, and how *distinguishing* an *Advantage* it is to the Christian Institution, to have been propagated after so swift and unaccountable a manner; to what useful *Ends* and *Purposes* the Consideration of it may be apply'd. And,

1st,

1<sup>st</sup>, This is, I say, an Advantage peculiar to the Christian Institution: For no other Religion ever had so large an Increase, with so little of Human Aid and Assistance; or prevail'd in such a manner, as to make a Recourse to Supernatural Influences necessary, in order to explain the Success of it. This may be collected, in great measure, from what hath been already hinted, in the preceding Discourse. However, I shall here resume the Reflection, and more particularly and fully evince the Truth of it.

S E R M.  
I V.

Of all false Religions, the *Mahometan* came nearest to the Christian, in the swift manner of its Propagation; for in a small time it over-ran a great part of the Eastern World. But this Success, how extraordinary soever, had nothing miraculous in it; nothing, but what may easily be accounted for, by reflecting on the Circumstances (already intimated) with which the Propagation of that Imposture was attended: Such, as the loose Manners, and lamentable Divisions of the Christians of that time; the Suitableness  
of

SERM. of *Mahomet's* Doctrine to the sensual Inclinations of Men, especially of those Eastern People, to whom it was first address'd; and the Method he us'd of procuring Submission to it, by the Dint of the Sword, not by the Power of Persuasion and Argument. A Religion, that gave a full Indulgence to the Ambition, the Lusts, and Cruelty of Mankind, could not fail of gaining Profelytes; and, when a Warlike and a Savage Race of Men, united by the Hopes of Rapine and Spoil, set upon a dissolute, divided, and weakened Enemy (as the Christians then were) the Success of such an Enterprize was sure and easy: and on the Success of *Mahomet's* Arms the Success of his Religion depended, When, by an uninterrupted Course of Victories, he had laid the Foundation of the *Saracen* Empire, it was no wonder that a new Empire should be able to introduce a new Religion; the Increase of the One, was naturally follow'd by a proportionable Enlargement of the Other: which, therefore, I say, had nothing *miraculous* in it;

it; nothing, that rival'd, or any ways SERM.  
 resembled the Success of the Gospel — IV.  
 that *Stone, which was cut out of the* Dan. ii.  
*Mountain, without Hands (i. e. without* 34. 35.  
 visible Causes and Instruments, propor-  
 tion'd to such a Work) *and brake in*  
*Pieces all other Kingdoms, and at last be-*  
*came itself a great Mountain, and filled*  
*the whole Earth.*

As to the *Jewish* Religion, it will not admit of any Comparison with the *Chri-*  
*stian*, either as to the Manner of its first Reception, or the Addition of Converts afterwards made to it. It was given to the *Israelites*, by *Moses*, in the Wilderness, whither he had led them out of the House of Bondage in their Way to a *Land flowing with Milk and Honey*. Now, (set-  
 ting aside the Consideration of *Miracles* by which the *Jewish* and *Christian* Dis-  
 pensations were alike confirm'd) the Re-  
 ception of the *Law* by the *Israelties* from such a Deliverer, under whose Conduct and Command they then entirely were, and in a Place, where they had no Com-  
 munication with the rest of the World,  
 had



SERM. had nothing in it near so wonderful as the


IV. first Plantation of the Christian Church  
 by means of the Apostles Preaching. And, as to the Accession of Gentile-Converts, after the Tabernacle was set up in *Shiloh*; it was too small and inconsiderable, to give the Religion of the *Jews* any Title, or Pretension to a Divine Original, on *that* Account.

The narrow Limits of the *Jewish* Church are thus, under the Emblem of a transplanted Vine, aptly represented by the Psalmist. *Thou hast brought* (says he) *a Vine out of Egypt, Thou hast cast out the Heathen, and planted it; Thou preparedst Room for it, and didst cause it to take deep Root, and it filled the Land, viz. the Land of Jewry, wherein it was set. The Hills (i. e. the Hill-Country of Judah, the farthest Point of Palestine, Southward) were covered with the Shadow of it, and the Boughs thereof were like the Cedars of God, on Mount Lebanon, in the Extremity of its Northern Borders. She sent out her Boughs into the Sea (the Mediterranean Sea, her ut-*  
 most


most Limit to the West) *and her Branches* S E R M.  
*to the River*, even as far Eastward as the 1 v.  
*River Euphrates*. Thus was the *Jewish* Ps. lxxx. 8,  
 Church, even in its most ample and 9. 10, 11.  
 flourishing Condition, shut up within  
 the Bounds of *Canaan*, and the Coun-  
 tries adjacent: Whereas that *Mustard-*  
*Seed*, the Kingdom of *Christ*, though it  
 were *less than all the Seeds that be in the* Luke xiii.  
*Earth*, yet, *when it was sown, it grew* 19.  
*up, and became greater than all the* Mark iv.  
*Herbs, and shot out great Branches, and*  
*the Fowls of the Air lodged in the*  
*Branches of it*; Men of all Countries,  
 and all Religions under Heaven flock'd  
 to it for Shade and Shelter.

Indeed, the *Mosaic* Law was intend-  
 ed for a single People only, who were to  
 be shut in, as it were, from the rest of  
 the World, by a Fence of Legal Rites,  
 and Typical Ceremonies; and to be  
 kept by that Means separate and un-  
 mix'd, till the great Antitype, the *Mes-*  
*siah*, should appear, and break down this  
 Fence, and lay open this Inclosure, pub-  
 lishing a Religion of a more extensive  
 Nature

SERM. Nature and Use, which all Mankind

IV.  should be invited to profess, and in which all would have an equal Interest. To these different Ends the *Law*, and the *Gospel*, were severally design'd; and to these, therefore, the different Circumstances of their Promulgation, and the chief Parts of their Worship, were severally accommodated. The *Law* was (as I said) given in the Desert, to a particular People; the *Gospel* was publish'd in *Jerusalem*, before a mixt Multitude of various Nations and Languages. The Miracles, by which the *Law* was confirm'd, were done before the *Jews* only, who alone were concern'd in them [for as to those perform'd by *Moses* in the Sight of *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians*, they were not intended to authorize the *Law*, which was not as yet given, but only to prove his Divine Mission for the *Temporal Rescue* of that People:] Whereas the *Gospel*-Miracles were wrought before the Enemies of the *Gospel*, in all Countries; because in all Countries the *Gospel* was to be propagated, believ'd, and

practis'd. The chief Parts of the Jewish SERM.  
Worship (which consisted in Sacrifices) IV.

were confin'd to a certain Place, at  which all the Males of that Religion were bound, thrice every Year, to appear; and that Religion, therefore, could be intended for such only as liv'd at no great Distance from the Jewish Temple: Whereas, when the Ends of the Earth were to be converted to Christ, the Christian Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving, and even the great Oblation of the Eucharist, was to be perform'd everywhere with equal Degrees of Acceptance, according to the Prediction of *Malachi*, the last Prophet of the Jewish Dispensation. *For from the rising of the Sun to Mal. 1. the going down of the same, my Name<sup>x</sup> shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every Place Incense shall be offered unto my Name, and a pure Offering; for my Name shall be great among the Heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts.*

The Jewish, then, and Christian Institutions, as they are widely different in many Respects, so particularly in This; that

S E R M. that the one was, by its original Frame

IV.




Luke iv.  
30.

and Intention, limited as to Place, Persons, and Time: Whereas the other was to be diffus'd throughout the World, and to endure together with it; that is, to be, indeed, what we find it not long after its first Erection styl'd, the *Catholic Church*. *Whereunto*, therefore, *shall we liken this Kingdom of God*, and its marvellous Increase? or *with what Comparison shall we compare it?* There is, indeed, some faint Resemblance of it in the prodigious Fecundity of *Seeds*; which, accordingly, our Saviour makes use of more than once, to illustrate it: but there is nothing parallel to it in the History of all the Religions which have sprung up, and obtain'd amongst Men, from the Beginning of the World to this Day.

And this *peculiar* Advantage of Christianity is so much the more remarkable, because,

2dly, It was presignify'd by *Types*, and foretold by various *Prophecies*. And when, therefore, the Event came to pass, it did, as it were, point out its Author,  
and

and declare itself to spring from Him, SERM.  
 who alone *knoweth* and ordereth *the* IV.  
*Times and the Seasons, and calleth the*   
*things that are not, as if they were.*

Of *Types*, the most illustrious, and most worthy of our present Consideration, is That, which relates to the wonderful Increase of the *Israelites* in *Ægypt*, concerning which the Sacred Story speaks in very expressive and emphatical Language: *They were fruitful* (says *Moses*) Exod. i. 7  
*and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty, and the Land was filled with them;* and this (it seems) notwithstanding the Arts that were us'd to lessen their Numbers, notwithstanding the great Hardships and Severities that were laid upon them: For again it is said, *The more the Ægyptians afflicted them,* Ib. v. 12:  
*the more they multiplied and grew.* A livelier Image than which there cannot be of the thriving Estate of the Christian Church, under all the Cunning and Malice of its Heathen Persecutors. Were the Seed of *Abraham* few, when they first came to sojourn in *Ægypt*? no more than

SERM. *seventy* Souls? The Number of the first

IV. Disciples of *Christ*, on the Day of Pentecost, when his Gospel began to be propagated, was not much greater. Did the several Kings of *Ægypt* keep a jealous Eye over the Children of *Israel*, and take all manner of unjust and cruel Methods to prevent their Increase? Just so fared it with the earliest Professors of the Gospel; the Rulers of the World harrafs'd and oppress'd them, and did what they could to crush Christianity, in its first Seeds, by severe Edicts and Penalties, and subtle Contrivances. Did the *Israelites* thrive nevertheless, and multiply exceedingly; so as, in the Space of four hundred and thirty Years, from the time of the Covenant made with *Abraham*, to come out of *Ægypt* above six hundred thousand strong, that were Men from twenty Years old and upwards, besides Women and Children, and a mixt Multitude, not rank'd into distinct Tribes and Families, that were without Number? The Increase of Christian Converts was yet more wonderful; and attended with this remark-

remarkable Circumstance of Resemblance, that it came to its utmost Pitch, near the same Period of Time, to wit, about four hundred and thirty Years after our Saviour had begun to preach and to say, *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* Such a strict Correspondence there was between these Events, that we may justly reckon the one of them, as designed to prefigure and typify the other. Especially, since the Promise made to *Abraham*, about the Fertility of his Descendants, was so worded by God, as at once to include the Increase of his *Natural* and *Spiritual* Seed, and plainly to point out that Access of Converts from all Nations to the Church, which should happen in the Days of the *Messiah*. *In blessing I will bless thee,* said God, *and in multiplying I will multiply thy Seed, as the Stars of the Heaven, and as the Sand which is upon the Sea-shore. And in thy Seed (i. e. in Christ, the promis'd Seed) shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed.* God begins, we see, with the Assurance


S E R M.

I V.





SERM. of a Temporal Blessing, a numerous


IV. Off-spring, according to the Flesh, and  
 ends with the future Enlargement of the  
 Spiritual Kingdom of *Christ*; the former of these being indeed a Figure only, or Mystical Emblem of the latter, to which this Divine Promise chiefly referr'd, and in which it was finally and

Gal. iii. 8. fully accomplish'd. *For the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen through Faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In Thee shall all Nations be blessed.*

The same Promise was afterwards expressly renew'd to *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, but to none other of the succeeding Patriarchs:

And from *these*, alone, therefore, God  
 Gen. xxvi. 4  
 xxviii. 18. took his *Title*, and vouchsafed to be call'd the God of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*; because to *these* alone he had made the Promise of that *Seed*, in whom all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed, by being ingrafted into his Church, and becoming the Subjects of his Spiritual Kingdom.

Many

Many Predictions of the same kind are S E R M.  
to be met with in the *Psalms*, and the I V.  
*Prophets*; particularly in *Isaiah*; his 1x<sup>th</sup>   
Chapter is nothing else but a Description  
of the glorious State of the Christian  
Church, upon the abundant Access of  
the *Gentiles*: And he closes that Prophecy  
as we have heard, with the *Text*, which  
in few Words comprizes the small Ap-  
pearance the Gospel should make at first,  
the vast Increase it should afterwards  
receive, and the speedy manner in which  
it should take place: *A little one shall  
become a Thousand, and a small one a  
great Nation; I the Lord will hasten it  
in His time*: In the *Messiah's* time this  
great Event shall come to pass; and,  
when it begins, it shall be *hastened*; it  
shall proceed with an astonishing and ir-  
resistible Swiftmess, until it be fulfill'd.

If then the victorious Progress of the  
Christian Faith be in itself a sufficient  
Evidence of its Divine Original; that Ar-  
gument must needs be somewhat height-  
ned and improv'd, by considering, that  
the Spirit of Prophecy had long before

S E R M. signify'd and promis'd this Success : For

IV. from the same Spirit, from which the  
 ~~~~~ Prophecy came, the Completion of, it  
 afterwards proceeded. I add,

3dly. That the Advantage peculiar in  
 this respect to Christianity, doth from  
 hence also appear, in that the wondrous  
 Success of the Gospel confirms the *Truth*  
 of those *Miracles*, by which it is said to  
 have been planted, and frees the Account  
 of them from all possible Suspicion of  
 Mistake, or Imposture.

The only Way that Infidelity hath left,  
 to escape the Force of the Argument  
 drawn from Miracles, is, by denying the  
 Truth of the Facts. How unreasonable  
 and absurd a Plea this is, may be shewn  
 many ways, particularly from hence :  
 That they, who deny the Credibility of  
 the Gospel-Miracles, must allow some-  
 what else, altogether as incredible ; to  
 wit, that the Gospel was propagated in-  
 to all the Regions, and subdu'd all the  
 Religions of the World, without Mira-  
 cles, which, considering the Meanness  
 and Incompetency of the Instruments,  
 that

that wrought this Effect, is itself a Miracle, and the greatest of Miracles \*.

IV.


In vain, therefore, do some Men reject the Account of the Miracles done by the Apostles, if they admit (and they cannot but admit) the Account of the extensive and swift Propagation of the Gospel by the Apostles Means; for the one of these Accounts evidently confirms and establishes the other. The very Existence of the World is a Proof, that it was at first miraculously created; and so, even the Existence of the Christian Religion (as at present spread and profess'd in the World) is a Proof, that it was at first miraculously planted. For the second Creation by *Christ Jesus*, can no more be accounted for by Natural Causes, than the first; and carries in it

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\* Πῶς, ἢ μὴ σημεῖα ποίουν, ἔπειθεν; ἢ μὴ ποίουν, θιγόντας ἢ ἢ δὲ μὴ ποίουν, καὶ ἐκείνους, πολλὰ θαυμάσιον ἢ τὸ συμβαίνει. Chrys. in 1 Cor. cap. 1. Ὅταν λίγους μὴ γινώσκουσιν σημεῖα, μηδένως ἐαυτοὺς περιπαίξουσιν· τοῦτο γὰρ μέγιστον σημεῖον, τὸ, χωρὶς σημεῖων, τὴν οἰκουμένην περιπαρμενῶν ἅπασαν, ὑπὸ δώδεκα πῶχων καὶ ἀγγεμάτων ἀνδρῶν ἀλυσιθῆσαν. Id. in Act. cap. 1.

S E R M. as evident Marks and Impressions of an  
 IV. Omnipotent Power.

~~~~~ Now this is such a Proof of the Reality of the Apostles Miracles, as is wanting to those wrought for the Establishment of the Law of *Moses*; the Authority of which stands solely on the Authority of External Testimony, and the Traditional Belief of the Jewish Nation; but we have no Internal Evidence of their Truth from the Nature and Reason of the Event. This way of Proof is particular to the Gospel-Miracles; the Account of which comes to us, not merely as Matter of Historical Truth, but as in itself demonstratively certain; because Miracles were necessary towards diffusing the Gospel in that speedy and effectual manner, wherein it is confess'd to have been propagated, And, where an End cannot be obtain'd, without particular Means, the visible Accomplishment of the End is a sure Proof that those Means must have been employ'd, which were necessary towards attaining it. The Jewish Worship might *possibly* have been erected by *Moses* in  
*Canaan,*

*Canaan*, though he had wrought no one SERM.  
Miracle to confirm it. The Christian IV.  
Faith could not *possibly* have taken Place   
in all the World, unless Miracles had made  
way for it: And the Truth, therefore,  
of the Gospel-Miracles, is doubly cer-  
tain to us, both from the Authority of  
Testimony, and from the Reason of the  
Thing, which gives a mighty Advan-  
tage to them over those of *Moses*, and  
cuts off all possible Occasions and Pre-  
tences of Distrust from the Infidel, and  
the Gainsayer.

Thus much to shew, “ How great  
“ and how distinguishing an Advantage  
“ it is to the Christian Institution, to  
“ have been propagated after so swift and  
“ unaccountable a manner, as we find  
“ it was.” It remains, that I should shew  
likewise,

“ To what useful Ends and Purposes  
“ This Consideration may be apply'd.

*Three* Things there are, which we may  
plainly learn from it. For it enables us  
to give a clear Account,

S E R M. I. Why the Destruction of *Jerusalem*'


IV. and the utter Extermination of the *Jews*,  
 was delay'd till forty Years after the Death  
 of our Saviour.

2. Why Miracles ceas'd so soon in the Christian Church, when they were continu'd so long in that of the *Jews*; even as long at least as their first Temple lasted.

3. Why God did not suffer Human Learning, or the Civil Power to come in to the Support of Christianity; the one, till above a hundred, the other, till three hundred Years after our Saviour. And,


1. We may satisfy ourselves, why the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the utter Extermination of the *Jewish* State, was delay'd till forty Years after the Death of *Christ*.

One would think, that the *Jews* had completely fill'd up the Measure of their Iniquities, when they spilt the Blood of *Christ*, and made themselves in the most solemn manner answerable for the Guilt of it; and that they were even Then grown ripe for Divine Vengeance. But  
 our

our Saviour having Pray'd on the Cross SERM.  
 for his Murtherers, the Merit of that IV.  
 Blood which they spilt, prevail'd with   
 God to respite their Punishment for some  
 time, and to leave them still farther Room  
 for Repentance. The Apostles, therefore,  
 by an exprefs Order of our Lord, as an  
 Antient Tradition informs us, tarried in  
*Judea*, and the neighbouring Countries,  
*Twelve Years* after his Ascent; Preach-  
 ing the *Gospel of Reconciliation* to the  
*Jews*, and exhorting them to *Repent*, and  
*be Baptized*, every one of them, in the  
*Name of Jesus*, for the Remission of their  
*Sins*: Particularly of that great Sin they  
 had committed in *Crucifying the Lord of*  
*Life*; which is mention'd, not only in the  
*First*, but in all the several Sermons  
 Preach'd to them by *St. Peter*, *St. Stephen*,  
 and *St. Paul*, whereof an Account is pre-  
 serv'd to us in the *Acts* of the *Apostles*.  
 These Applications proving fruitless, and  
 the *Twelve Years* expiring, God com-  
 manded the Disciples to execute their  
 Commission in its utmost Extent, and to go  
*Teach and Baptize all Nations*, that the




SERM. Faith of the *Gentiles* might be a Reproach

IV, to the *Jewish* Infidelity. And so indeed  
 it was. For nothing could better illustrate  
 the Infinite Goodness of God, and the  
 incorrigible Perverseness of that People;  
 than to observe, that the rest of the  
 World flock'd in to the Obedience of  
*Christ*, as soon as the Apostles erected  
 the Standard of the Cross, while the *Jews*  
 still stood out Obstinate and Impenitent:  
 The Rest of the World, I say, who had  
 neither so immediate an Interest in the  
*Messiah* as They, nor were so capable of  
 discerning his Character, and the Time  
 of his Coming; nor had any Share in  
 the Guilt of spilling his Blood, which  
 might excite them the more eagerly to  
 lay hold of the Gospel-Pardon. Within  
 less than *Thirty* Years, after the *Apostles*  
 set out from *Jewry*, they made Proselytes  
 every where; *Their Sound went into all the*  
*Earth, and their Words unto the Ends of*  
*the World.* And now, therefore, God's  
 Mercy to the Seed of *Abraham*, being ma-  
 nifested in the most conspicuous manner,  
 and their Infidelity being heightened by  
 all

Rom x.  
18

All possible Circumstances of Aggravati- S E R M.

on, He inflicted the Sentence of Excision, I V.  
 which he had before pronounc'd; but 

which could not be executed, till the Church of the *Gentiles*, which was to succeed that of the *Jews*, had taken sufficient Root in the World. *Haste thee*, Gen xix. 22.  
 (said the destroying Angel to *Lot*) *escape*

to Zoar, for I cannot do any thing [*i. e.* cannot execute my Commission against

*Sodom*] till thou be come thither. And, in like manner, may the Spirit seem to have quickened the Industry of the *Apostles*, by saying, "Haste Ye, spread the Doctrine

"of *Christ* every where; for, till that be

"done, I cannot pour out my Fury on

"*Jerusalem*." Thus had our Lord him-

self, a little before his Passion, declar'd,

*This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be*

*Preached in all the World, for a Wit-*

*ness unto all Nations; and then shall*

*the End come*; that is, the *End* of the

*Jewish* Polity, and of the whole *Mosaic*

*Dispensation*. A

2d Thing, we may learn from the

swift manner in which the Gospel was


pro-

Matt. xxiv. 14.

SERM. propagated, is, to give ourselves from  
 IV. thence an Account, why Miracles ceas'd  
 so soon in the Christian Church, when  
 they were continu'd so long in that of  
 the *Jews*, even as long at least as their  
 first Temple stood.

The great Use of Miracles was, to confirm the Truth, and promote the Reception of the Gospel, at its first setting out. That Use ceasing, Miracles likewise ceas'd; being gradually, and, in about an Age after the Ascent of *Christ*, almost totally withdrawn. For what *St. Paul*, says expressly of *Tongues*, holds equally true of all other Supernatural Gifts and Powers, indulg'd to the first Promulgers of Christianity; they were *Signs to those who believed not, not to those who believed.*

Indeed, since the *Jewish* Dispensation had receiv'd its Authority entirely from Miracles, it could not, without more and greater Miracles, be abolish'd. Since the Kingdom of Satan, and the Idolatrous Worship of the Heathen Gods, had been erected upon *false* and *lying* Wonders,  
*true*

rue ones were necessary to overthrow it. SERM.  
 But, as soon as the Cross of *Christ* had IV.  
 every where triumph'd in some Measure   
 over *Judaism* and *Paganism*; there was  
 no need of a continu'd Series of Miracles,  
 to complete the Conquest, or to confirm  
 the Faith of those who embrac'd Christia-  
 nity. The manifest Reasonableness and  
 Excellence of its Precepts, were of them-  
 selves sufficient to make it flourish still  
 more and more, and baffle all remaining  
 Opposition. Especially, since those, who  
 were to live at the greatest Distance from  
 the Miracles done in the Infancy of the  
 Gospel, might be as clearly satisfy'd of  
 the Truth of them, as if they themselves  
 had actually seen them; partly, from the  
 Evangelic Writings receiv'd early in all  
 Christian Churches; and, partly, from  
 the Reason and Nature of the Thing itself;  
 it being (as I have already shewn) toge-  
 ther impossible, that, without Miracles,  
 such a Degree of Success should have at-  
 tended the first Preachers of the Gospel.

But now, as to the Law of *Moses*, the  
 Case was quite otherwise: For, though  
 it

SERM. it was usher'd in by Miracles, yet those

IV. Miracles being perform'd in the Desert,  
 without any Witnesses but what were of that Nation; and before a Race of Men, that were extinct, ere the *Jewish* Worship was erected in *Canaan*; and the Account of those Miracles being contain'd in a Book, which was all along kept secret from the rest of the World; Infidelity found some Room, or Colour to suspect the Truth of them: Nor could it necessarily be inferr'd from that Degree of Success which the *Jewish* Religion met with, that it *must* have sprang originally from Miracles. The Whole of that Religion consisted in Ceremonious *Rites* and *Observances*, which had no Intrinsic Goodness in them, nor any clear Marks or Characters upon them of that Divine Authority by which they were commanded. Their *Typical* Use and Reference was little known to the *Jews* themselves, and could be less discern'd by those who were *Strangers to the Covenant of Promises*. In a Word, the Law of *Moses*, as distinguished from all other Religious  
 Institu-



Institutions, had nothing in the Frame and Design of it, apt either to recommend it to its Professors, or to invite Profelytes. During such a Ceremonious State, it might be requisite for God, by frequent Manifestations of his Divine Power and Presence, to keep that backsliding People within the Bounds of their Duty, and procure Reverence to the Worship which he had set up, from the Idolatrous Nations around them : It might be requisite, I say, that he should, at fit Intervals, own himself to be the Author of their Religion, and do New Miracles, to keep up the Credit and Influence of the Old Ones. Miracles, therefore, continu'd in that Church for many Ages after its first Erection : For, besides those which their several Prophets occasionally wrought, the immediate Appearance of God in the *Shechinah*, or Cloud of Glory, and his Answers by *Urim* and *Thummim*, were familiar, while the Tabernacle, and first Temple lasted ; and even many of their *Laws*, (for Instance, the *Law of Jealousy*, those for the At-

S E R M. tendance of the *Jews* at their *Three Great*

IV. *Festivals*, and for their Resting in the *Sabbatic Year*) were so contriv'd, as to be Demonstrative Proofs of the Immediate Interposition of God in the Affairs of that People. With good Reason, therefore, was a long Succession of Miracles indulg'd under that Dispensation: Not so, under the Gospel; which, after it was sufficiently established, needed not New Signs and Wonders, to preserve, or promote the Belief of it; its Original Success being, as it were, a perpetual Standing Miracle, of sufficient Force to evince its Divine Extraction, from the Beginning of Christianity to the End of it. A

3<sup>d</sup> Use, which, I thought, might be made of the Miraculous Manner of Propagating the Gospel, was, to give ourselves from thence an Account, Why God did not suffer *Human Learning*, or the *Civil Power* to come in to the Support of it; the One, till at least an Hundred, the other, till three Hundred Years after our Saviour. The Design of this  
Part

Part of the Divine Conduct seems to have been, that the Establishment of our Faith might appear manifestly to be the Immediate Work of Heaven, and not owing to human Means, or any Set of Natural Causes. The Apostles themselves confess (and glory in confessing) that, as they Preach'd the Doctrine of *Christ* in the most simple, artless manner; not with *Excellency of Speech*, or the *Enticing Words of Man's Wisdom*; so the first Converts, whom their Labours brought over to the Faith, were generally mean Persons of no acquir'd Knowledge, no Rank, no Education. For, *Not many Wise Men after the Flesh, not many Mighty, not many Noble were called; but God chose the Foolish things of the World, to confound the Wise; and the Weak things of the World, to confound the things which were Mighty; and the Base things of the World, and the things which were despised did he chuse; yea, and the things which were not, (such is the Less'ning Phrase of St. Paul) to bring to nought the things which were.* The Reason of

S E R M.

IV.




1 Cor. i.  
26, 27, 28.



S E R M. which *Choice* is plainly set down in the

IV. following Words: *That no Flesh might glory in his Presence*: He would have no Rivals, no Sharers in the Glory of this Event; and, therefore, produc'd it in such a manner, and by such unproportion'd Means, as to make it impossible for considering Men to mistake the true Author; so, as that all, who look'd on, Ps cix 27. should be ready to cry out, *This is thy Hand, and thou, Lord, hast done it.*

Indeed it was, on more Accounts than one, requisite, that human Learning should not be admitted into the Christian Church, till it was sufficiently spread and settled. For, tho' the Use of Learning might from the Beginning, have been great, in order to confound the vain Sophistry, and wild Superstition of the *Greeks*, and to vindicate the Doctrine of *Christ* against all their Objections: yet great Inconveniencies might also have redounded to the Faith by the Means of it. For it must be confess'd, that, when Philosophers in After-times embrac'd our Religion, they blended it often with the peculiar Notions of those  
Sects

Sects in which they had been educated, S E R M.  
and by that means corrupted the Pu- I V.  
rity and Simplicity of the Christian Doc-   
trine. Had this happened from the Be-  
ginning, such an Early Mixture of Phi-  
losophy with Christianity would have bid  
fair for an Universal Reception in suc-  
ceeding Ages. But the Gospel being first,  
for an Age and more, purely and simply  
profess'd, there was no great Danger of  
its suffering from the Subtleties and Re-  
finements of Philosophy afterwards; be-  
cause every Christian was then able to  
compare them with, and try them by,  
the plain Primitive Rule of Faith, re-  
ceiv'd till that Time in all Churches; and  
might securely reject, or admit them, up-  
on such a Comparifon.

For these Reasons, the Learned and  
Wife of this World seem to have been  
overlook'd by God in the first Plantation  
of the Gospel; that neither its Success  
might be imputed to their Skill and  
Assistance, nor its Doctrine run the  
Risque of being blended early with their  
particular Opinions. However, still we

S E R M. may observe, that the Admission of

IV. *Learning* was long before the Admission of the *Civil Power*; because the former, having less Force and Influence than the latter towards procuring the Establishment of the Gospel, was, consequently, less liable to be suspected as the Cause of it. Let me add also, that, as the Powers of this World would have been mightier Instruments of advancing Christianity, than human Learning could be, so would they have been more able, and more likely to corrupt it, and enervate the Force of it; as we find, that, not long after their coming into the Christian Church, they actually did: And therefore, on this Account likewise was their Admission longer postpon'd. For near three hundred Years after Christ, no *Roman Emperor* embraced the Faith; tho' they were (several of them) Men of great Moral Virtues, and *not far from the Kingdom of God*, as to their Personal Qualifications and Characters. Such, particularly, were *Vespasian, Titus, Trajan, Adrian*, and the two *Antonines*. Yet it  
pleas'd

pleas'd the Divine Providence, that even these good Emperors, instead of embracing, and protecting the Christian Faith, should discourage and persecute it; that so the *Kingdom of Christ*, which was *not of this World*, might not be beholden to any of the Kingdoms of this World for its Establishment; but spread and fix itself every where, not only without the Aid of Princes, but against their Will; in spite of their fiercest Opposition, nay, even by the Means of it. *The Kings of the Earth*, Ps. ii. 2, and the Rulers took Counsel together 4, 6, 8. against the Lord, and against his Anointed. He that sat in the Heavens laughed them to scorn, the Lord had them in Derision. He set his King upon his holy Hill of Sion, first; and then, gave him the Heavens for his Inheritance, and the uttermost Parts of the Earth for his Possession. Herod, and Pontius Pilate began this Opposition (for thus hath St. Peter expressly apply'd Acta iv. the Prophecy) and the Roman Emperors, 27. till Constantine, continu'd it. Nevertheless, the Word of God went on, conquering to conquer; till it had subdu'd even

S E R M. these Subduers of the World to the Obe-

IV. dience of the Faith, and brought them to  
 1 Rev. iv. *cast their Crowns before the Throne of the*

10 Lamb, and to acknowledge, that *The Foolishness of God is wiser than Men, and*  
 1 Cor. i. *the Weakness of God is stronger than Men,*  
 25. even than the strongest and the highest

among the Sons of Men. There was then a Christian Church, long before there were any Christian Princes ; She did not grow up under Their Shadow, but receiv'd them into Her Bosom : And, as she subsisted for several Centuries, ere the Civil Power came in to her, so will she endure for endless Ages, when the Civil Power shall be no more ; and even now, when she receives Protection and Encouragement from it, yet is She in all the chief Functions and Operations of the Ministers of her Spiritual Kingdom, independent upon it. Thus did God order things, on purpose, that the Distinction of these several Societies, Offices, and Powers might be evident ; and perpetually without Encroachment or Confusion, preserv'd : And, *let no Man join together what God hath thus put*

put asunder ! It remains that I should, SERM.  
under my




Fifth and last General Head, briefly inquire into the Time when, and the Manner how this Miracle ceas'd, and make suitable Reflections upon it, with regard both to those who liv'd then, when this Check was given to the Gospel, and to Us, who live now in the Latter Ages of the World.

V.

The plain Answer to the Enquiry propos'd, is, That the Miracle ceas'd, when the Civil Power began to declare openly in Behalf of Christianity; that is, soon after *Constantine* came to the Throne. For it was no longer a Wonder, that our Religion should thrive and flourish, when, instead of bitter Persecutions, it met with all manner of Encouragements. For a Century after *Constantine*, and upwards, the Number of Christians multiplied exceedingly in all the Parts of the World in which it had already been planted, and to which the Empire of the *Romans*, or their Influence, did extend. For

above

S E R M. above a Century after that, Christianity

IV.  seems to have been at a stand; neither gaining much Ground, nor losing much, unless only in the Lives of its lukewarm Professors. But then it declin'd apace every Day; Dissentions among Christians grew hot, and their Zeal for Religion waxed cold. The great Honours and Endowments, which Religious Princes had bestow'd on the Church, did too often occasion Ambition and Luxury in those who contended for them, or possess'd them. In a Word, all the Vices of Prosperity abounded, together with the Advantages of it; So that the Name of Christianity was no longer Venerable in the Eyes of Men; and its holy Doctrine, not producing an answerable Sanctity of Life, made no farther Impressions upon them. This unhappy Opportunity *Mabomet* laid hold of, to set up his Religion; which being (as I have said) suited to the Voluptuous Manners of the East, and seconded by the Power of the Sword, made large Inroads into Christendom, and tore away entire Provinces at once from

from the Profession of the Gospel. Since S E R M.  
 that time, Christianity seems to have I V.  
 been almost in a continual Decay: *The* Pf. book.  
*Hedges of this Vineyard of God being bro-* 12, 13.  
*ken down, all they that went by, plucked*  
*off her Grapes: the Wild-Boar of the*  
*Wood did root it up, and the wild Beast*  
*out of the Field did devour it; till a*  
 Discovery of some unknown Parts of the  
 World opened a new Way for enlarging  
 the Bounds of Christ's Kingdom. The  
 Zeal of some Devout Men (tho' mixed  
 often with Private Interests and Designs)  
 stirr'd them up to make use of this Advan-  
 tage, and to Publish the Gospel of Christ  
 in the remotest Corners of the East, whi-  
 ther, it is probable, none of the Apostles  
 ever came. There also Christianity (a  
 corrupt and superstitious Christianity)  
 hath gotten footing. How long it may  
 continue, and how far it may advance, is  
 known to Him alone, *who hath deter-* Acta xvii.  
*mined the Times before appointed,* 26. to Reli-  
 gions as well as Nations, *and the Bounds*  
*of their Habitation.* I shall not pre-  
 sume to enquire into it; but shall raise




S E R M. an Useful Reflection or two from what  
 IV. hath been observ'd on this Head, and  
 with a short Application of it to our  
 Selves, shall conclude this Discourse.

The Imperfect Propagation of the Gospel, and the Prevalence of *Mahometism* \* over it, are some of the darkeſt Secrets of Divine Providence. But the Cauſes that contributed to produce this great Revolution are manifeſt: they were plainly the Vices and Diſcords of the Chriſtians of thoſe Times, that gave the Enemies of our Faith Courage to attack it, put Weapons into their Hands, and furniſhed them with all manner of Advantages

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\* Nulli unquam genti tam latè regnatum fuit, neque tam brevi temporis ſpatio unquam tot regiones, tot regna ſub jugum miſſa. Incredible dictu, veriſſimum tamen eſt, octoginta aut non multo plurium annorum ſpatio, ſubjugârunt illi & Diabolico *Mahummedis* Imperio acquiſiverunt Palæſtinam, Syriam, Armeniam utramque, totam ſermè Aſiam minorem, Perſiam, Indiam, Ægyptum, Numidiam, Barbariam totam ad Nigrum uſque fluvium, Luſitaniam, Hiſpaniam. Neque hic ſtetit illorum fortuna aut ambitio, donec & Italiæ magnam quoque partem adjecerint, ad portas uſque urbis Romæ; quinetiam Siciliam, Candiam, Cyprum, & reliquas maris Mediterranci inſulas. *Mede Comm. Apoc. Lib. 3. Tuba 5. p. 468.*

against it. *Christ* came into the World S E R M.  
on purpose to subdue the Power, and I V.  
destroy the Kingdom of *Satan*. He   
display'd the Banner of his Cross, and  
summon'd all Nations to repair to it ;  
who accordingly obey'd the Signal. But  
while the Extremeſt Parts of the Earth  
were meditating a Submission, while his  
greatest Enemies were hastening to put  
their Necks under his Feet, a Stop was  
put to their Intentions, and his Tri-  
umphs, by the Mutinies and Desertions  
of his own Soldiers. Who can suffici-  
ently deplore the Guilt, and detest the Ill  
Influence of those Vices, which cut off  
so many Kingdoms at once from the  
Empire of *Christ* ? not only arrested his  
Doctrine in its full Course, and said to it,  
*Hither shalt thou come, and no farther ;*  
but made the Sun of Righteousness *go*  
*backward*, as it were, *ten Degrees*, and  
leave many Countries under gross Dark-  
ness, which had once been enlighten'd  
with the saving Truths of the Gospel ?  
Certainly, Spiritual Faction and Pride,  
and Uncharitable Breaches of Christian  
Unity

SERM. Unity and Peace, are not such slight

IV. Offences as some Men are willing to think them; since it was owing in great measure to These, that the Universal Reign of *Christ* upon Earth was then hinder'd, and the Accomplishment of the Prophecies in that respect deferred to distant Ages.

Many Princes since, indiscreetly Pious, have made Attempts to regain the Ground, Christianity lost, by the Force of their Arms, and to plant the Faith anew in those Places, where it once had Possession, by the Points of their Swords. But (alas!) that great Work is to be accomplish'd, not by such *Holy Wars* as these; but by Conflicts of another kind, which we must maintain with our own Corrupt Habits, and Vicious Inclinations; not by Foreign Acquisitions, but *Domestick Victories* over those Impieties of Christians, which gave the great Enemy of our Faith his first Advantages against it: For tho' the

Math. xi. *Kingdom of Heaven suffer Violence, and*  
 12.  
 2 Cor. x. *the violent take it by force; yet the Wea-*  
 4. *pons of our Warfare are not Carnal, but*  
*Spiritual.*

*Spiritual.* When the Conversions of S E R M.  
those that name the Name of *Christ*, be- IV.  
come agreeable to the Purity of his Doc-  
trine; when the Divisions of *Christendom*  
are heal'd, and the Professors of our Holy  
Faith live together every where like Men  
of one Mind, in one House; then shall  
the Sceptre of *Christ's* Kingdom extend  
itself to all the unconverted Parts of the  
Earth, and not sooner.

That God, ere the Day of Final Doom,  
will bring this about, the Scripture seems  
to say: but of the particular Time, at  
which he will effect it, we know no more,  
than of That, in which he will come to  
Judgment. However, let us All, as far  
as lies in our Power, contribute to this  
Great Event, and prepare the way for it.  
None of Us, I think, are now oblig'd to  
enter upon the *Mission*, and sacrifice our  
Lives, in order to spread the Gospel among  
*Mahometans* and *Heathens*: I say, None  
of us, I think, are now oblig'd to it, as  
not being arm'd with the Power of *Mir-*  
*acles*, requisite for such an Attempt.  
However, without hazarding our Lives,  
much

S E R M. much may be done by us, both at Home

1 V. and Abroad, towards encouraging and  
 ~~~~~ promoting so good a Work. And let us  
 not blame, much less deride those Good  
 Men (though of another Communion)  
 whose honest Zeal hath carried them yet  
 farther. Let us rather mention with Ho-  
 nour the Names of as many of them, as  
 we can reasonably suppose to have been  
 led into this Design by sincere Motives  
 of advancing the Glory of God, and the  
 Salvation of Souls, without aiming at  
 By-Ends, or any Temporal Advantages ;  
 and let us wish, that the Reformation  
 had not undergone just Reproaches for  
 its Backwardness to promote so glorious  
 an Enterprize : an Omission, not easily  
 to be excused in such Protestant Nations,  
 as have greatly enlarg'd their Traffick  
 and Wealth, by the Productions of those  
 Countries, wherein many poor Ignorant  
 Savages dwell, who want only to be  
 instructed in the saving Knowledge of  
*Christ*, in order to embrace it. But, *how*  
*shall they believe in Him, of whom they*  
*have not heard? and how shall they hear,*  
*with-*

without a Preacher? It might justly be SERM.  
 expected, that Those, who *had been par-* IV.  
*takers of the Carnal things of these Gen-* Rom. xii.  
*tiles,* should have *ministred unto them* 14.

*in Spiritual things*; that, after enriching themselves by the Spoils of those Provinces (which I know not what Right they had to invade, and conquer) they should at least have made them that charitable Return of planting the Gospel among them; a Work, of greater Importance, and Service to the Publick than all their other *Plantations*.

But this is a Reflection, in which, perhaps few, if any, that hear me, are concern'd. To conclude, therefore, Let every One of us, in our several Places and Stations, do our best to promote the Kingdom of *Christ* within us, by promoting the Love and Practice of Evangelical Purity and Holiness; and let us likewise frequently put up our most ardent Requests for the Enlargement of his Visible Administration without us; *beseeching* God, in the Words of our Church, that he would *please, of his Gracious*

170      *The Miraculous Propagation, &c.*

SERM. *Goodness, shortly to accomplish the Number*  
IV. *of his Elect, and to hasten the Kingdom of*  
~~~~~ *his Dear Son.*

*To Him, with the Father and the Holy  
Ghost, be ascribed all Honour, Do-  
minion, and Might, now and for ever !  
Amen.*

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*A Scornor Incapable of True Wisdom.*

---

A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

Q U E E N

A T


*WHITE-HALL,*

*October 28, 1694.*

---

PROV. xiv. 6.

*A Scornor seeketh Wisdom, and findeth  
it not.*

IT is the Wisest among the Children S E R M.  
of Men, who speaks; and about That, v.  
which most nearly concerns Us; and He   
best understood, even the Method of at-  
taining True Wisdom: It becomes us,

M 2

therefore




S E R M. therefore, to give the most fix'd and serious Attention, we can, to what he is saying.

*A Scornor*, saith he, *seeketh Wisdom, and findeth it not*. Where we are, first, to enquire, Who it is, that is represented to us, under the Character of a *Scornor*; and, then, in what Sense he is said to *seek Wisdom*, but *not to find it*.

The *Scornor* is One, who is frequently mention'd in this Book of *Proverbs*; and against whom the Author of it hath levell'd no small Number of his Apophthegms, and wise Sayings. We find in the *Psalms* and *Prophetick* Writings also, many Glances at him, many Complaints of him; so that the Nation of the *Jews* did, it seems, abound mightily with this Sort of Men; and they were a Great and Particular Grievance to the Followers of True Piety and Wisdom.

Their Character seems, in short, to have been This. They were Men, that, with much ado, had made a shift to get rid of Good Principles, and such stiff Opinions, as they found inconsistent with

a Loose

a Loose Practice. As they had not any S E R M.  
 Religion themselves, so their Way was v.  
 to despise Those who had; to look down   
 with Pity and Contempt upon a poor de-  
 luded Under-World; beasts of Burthen  
 that followed in a Track, after their  
 Leaders; Slaves to receiv'd Rules, and  
 Precarious Opinions, to Foolish Empty  
 Forms and Observances; but who never  
 once reason'd freely, or thought for Them-  
 selves. They were unfortunately fallen  
 into a Time, when frequent Commotions  
 happen'd in the *Jewish* State (as the Case  
 remarkably was, in the Age before *Solo-*  
*mon* came to the Throne) and had seen  
 several Sorts of Men uppermost, and,  
 consequently, several Notions of things  
 prevailing by Turns. This contributed  
 mightily to unsettle their Thoughts, or  
 (as they call'd it doubtless) to *enlarge*  
 them; to create in them a slight Opinion  
 of the Eternal Differences of Right and  
 Wrong, Good and Evil; and to make  
 them laugh at Those, who were Eager on  
 any Side, or for any Cause whatsoever,  
 which they did not get by.


SERM. They evidently saw that Some, who  
v. sat up for greater Purity, and a Demurer  
Shew and Face of Religion than their  
Neighbours, were really Counterfeits, and  
meant nothing, at the bottom, but Their  
own Interest. And they wisely resolv'd,  
upon this, that all Religion was, like  
Theirs, a Convenient Trick and Pre-  
tence only; invented by cunning Men  
to keep silly People in awe, to make  
Princes Reign safely, and the Priesthood  
Live easily. But as for Them, they  
knew better things than to fall in with  
the Herd, and to give themselves up to  
be ridden by the Tribe of *Levi*; the  
Poorest and most Contemptible Tribe of  
the Twelve, which had no Lot, no In-  
heritance among their Brethren; but liv'd  
upon the Cheat of Sacrifices and Offer-  
ings, and upon driving a Gainful Traffick  
for the Good Things of This World,  
here paid down to them, by promising  
and preaching up to Those they dealt  
with, a Recompence in a World to  
come.

Nor were these Men content to enjoy this Secret, which they had thus found out, quietly among themselves; but set up openly for Profelytes, and a Party; for running down all Religion, and for laughing Piety and Virtue out of Countenance: So that a Good and Honest Man was sure to be their Mark, where-soever they found him; and they were ever *shooting their Arrows* against him, Psal. lxxv. *even Bitter Words.* And this was come<sup>3.</sup> to that pass, that the True Servants of God did almost sink under the Affliction; and did make it matter of Publick Request to God in the Solemn Service of the Church, to be freed from it: — *Have* Psal. cxiii. *mercy upon us, O Lord, said They, have* <sup>3, 4.</sup> *mercy upon us, for we are exceedingly fill'd with Contempt. Our Soul is exceedingly fill'd with the Scorning of Those that are at Ease, and with the Contempt of the Proud.*

This is, in some measure, the Character of that Man, who, in the Language of the Text, is call'd *A Scorner*; and You see now, in what Sense he is said to *seek*

S E R M. *Wisdom, but not to find it.* For the mean-

v. ing of these Expressions is plainly this ;  
 ~~~~~ That he pretends to know more, and to  
 see farther, than the rest of Mankind ;  
 to have made freer Enquiries after Truth,  
 and to have shaken off the Prejudices of  
 Education more thoroughly : He sets up  
 for examining things to the bottom,  
 without taking them upon Trust, or re-  
 lying on the Authority of any Man. What  
 God is pretended to have said in the Ho-  
 ly Writings, what Wise and Good Men  
 have said in all Ages, and Countries of  
 the World, he is not much concern'd to  
 know. To the *Oracles of Right Reason*  
*he goes*, (by Right Reason always mean-  
 ing his Own) and from thence he en-  
 quires what he is to think, and to do ;  
 raises some fanciful Scheme of things to  
 himself, frames some particular Set of  
 Opinions ; and then rejoices in the migh-  
 ty Discovery he hath made, and wonders  
 at the rest of the World, that they do  
 not fall in with it, and adore it. Now  
 these Pretences, the Wise-man tells us,  
 are vain, and these Searches are vain ;  
 he


he hath taken a great deal of pains, only S E R M.  
to be out of the way, and to miss the v.  
mark which he aims at: *A Scorners seek-*  
*eth Wisdom, and findeth it not.* 

Having thus largely open'd the Sense of the Text, I shall endeavour, in what follows, to justify the Truth of the Observation contain'd in it, by shewing you, how it comes to pass, that the Men, who thus set up for a more than ordinary pitch of Wisdom and Sense, by Contemning Religion, and Deriding the Professors of it, do always, and must always, fail of the End which they propose to themselves; since, whatever Abilities they may have in Other matters, yet they are the most unqualified and incapable, of all Men, to make impartial Enquiries after Divine Truth, and to discern between That and Error.

There are *Four* things, which particularly unfit a Man for such a Task, a very *Proud*, or a very *Suspicious* Temper; *False Wit*, or *Sensuality*. And These are the Chief and Prevailing Ingredients in the Composition of that Man, whom we call a *Scorners*. The Two last do generally,

S E R M. nerally, and in most instances, belong to  
 v. him: But the Two First are Essential to  
 him, and inseparable from him.


*Pride* is that Ruling Quality which, of all others, seems to take the fastest Hold of him; *Proud and Haughty* Scornor is his Name, says Solomon, elsewhere. And again, *There is a Generation, O how lofty are their Eyes! and their Eyelids lifted up!* The truth is, there never was, nor ever can be a settled Contempt of Religious Principles, that is not built upon *Pride*, i.e. upon an undue Value, which a Man hath for himself, and for his own Opinion, and a Disregard for every thing besides: And, therefore, the Author of (that Fantastical Book) the *Leviathan*, doth, at the very Entrance of it, very honestly, and in Terms confess, that he is a Man who *Loves his own Opinions*. And so, doubtless, doth every Man too, who treads in His Steps, tho' he doth not own it so frankly, or perhaps know it so thoroughly. Indeed a Modest Humble Man can hardly bring himself once to think of shaking off common

mon received Principles, and going a- S E R M.  
gainst the United Wisdom of Mankind: v.  
or, if he should entertain, yet will he   
never venture to publish that Thought;  
but will conceal it, as carefully as he  
would his own Bosom Infirmity, or the  
Secret of his Friend. 'Tis the presump-  
tuous and proud Man alone, who dares  
to trample on those Truths, which the  
rest of the World reverence; and can sit  
down quietly in the Assurance, that He  
alone is in the Right, and all Mankind  
beside in the Wrong.

Now, I say, as there is no one Quality,  
that sticks more closely to a Scorn-  
er than that of Pride, so is there none that  
doth more evidently obstruct right Rea-  
soning, and an impartial Search after  
Truths of all kinds, especially those which  
relate to Virtue and Piety. And no  
wonder therefore, if on this Account the  
Scorn-er, tho' he *seek Wisdom*, yet *findeth*  
*it not*. *Pride* makes a Man seem suf-  
ficient in his own Eyes, for all manner of  
Speculations and Enquiries; and, there-  
fore, puts him indifferently upon the Pur-  
suit



SERM. suit of all Knowledge, and the Determination of all Doubts, without giving him


v.  Leave to distrust himself in the least, or once to consider, which way his Genius and Abilities lie. Hence it happens, that the Man, not being duly qualified for every Search, or, if he were, yet not having Leisure and Opportunity enough to go through with it, is fain to take up with slight and superficial Accounts of things; and then, what he wants in true Knowledge, to make up in downright Assurance. As soon as he hath touch'd on any Science, or Study, he immediately seems to himself to have master'd it; is as positive in his Opinions, and as hardy in his Assertions, as if the Thoughts of his whole Life had been directed that way only: Which is, as if a Coaster, who had gone from Port to Port only, should pretend to give a better Description of the Inland Parts of a Country, than those who have travell'd it all over. But this, I say, is the mischievous Nature of Pride; it makes a Man grasp at every thing, and, by Consequence,

sequence, comprehend nothing effectually and thoroughly; and yet (which is worst of all) inclines him to despise and contradict those that do. It gives him just enough Understanding, to raise an Objection or a Doubt; but not enough to lay it: Which, as it is the meanest and most despicable, so it is also the most dangerous State of Mind a Man can be in; and by so much the more dangerous, as the Subject, upon which his Enquiries turn, is more important, and the Errors more fatal which he runs into, for want of a due Knowledge of it. He that is but half a Philosopher, is in danger of being an Atheist; an Half-Physician is apt to turn Empiric; an Half-bred Man is conceited in his Address, and troublesome in his Conversation. Thus it is in all Matters of Speculation, or Practice; He that knows but a little of them, and is very confident of his own Strength, is more out of the way of true Knowledge, than if he knew nothing at all. Now there is, I say, a natural Tendency in Pride, towards putting a Man's Mind  
into

S E R M.

V.



S E R M. into such a Situation as this ; and, therefore, it must needs be a Quality very  
 v.  opposite to the Search and Attainment of true Wisdom.

And then, supposing a proud Man to be once in the Wrong, it is scarce possible that he should ever be set right again ; he is plac'd above the reach of that great Means of Amendment, Reproof ; *A*

Prov. xiii. *Scornor beareth not rebuke*, says Solomon :  
 1.

And, therefore, as his Pride led him into a Mistake at first, so will it be sure to keep him there ; and to harden him in his way, against whatever wise Men can think, or say of him.

Thus, I say, is Pride an Enemy to the Knowledge of Truth in general ; but most of all doth it hinder Men from discerning Sacred Truth, and the Doctrines of Reveal'd Religion. A proud Man is very hardly brought to digest the humble Duties of the Cross, or to admit a Belief of the Mysteries of Christianity : The one are too low for him, and he cannot stoop to the Practice of them ; the other are too high for his Understanding, and he


he desires to be excus'd from entertain-  
 ing any Proposition as true, which he  
 doth not perfectly comprehend. If he  
 cannot give himself a certain plain Ac-  
 count, in what Manner, and to what  
 End God did a thing; he wisely resolves,  
 that therefore he did it not at all. If he  
 hath not as clear an Idea of every Term  
 in an Article of Faith, as he hath of those  
 in a Mathematical Proposition; 'tis pre-  
 sently unphilosophical, absurd, and foolish;  
 invented by those, whose Interest it is  
 to puzzle Mens Understandings, that they  
 may have their Wills and Affections at  
 their Service.

S E R M.

V.



And this puts us in mind also of that II.  
*Second great Ingredient* in the Character  
 of a Scornor, which we propos'd to con-  
 sider; a strange and unreasonable De-  
 gree of *Suspicion*, by which he doubts of  
 every thing he hears, and distrusts every  
 Man he converses with; imagines the  
 World to be all Cheat and Imposture;  
 that there is no Sincerity, no Honesty  
 any where; but that every Man is con-  
 tinually

SERM. continually studying how to put a Trick upon his Neighbour. Without this Temper  
 v.  (it might be easily prov'd, that) a Man cannot bring himself to run down Religion, and the Professors of it; and, with it, it is impossible, I think, to arrive at true Wisdom. Indeed, to be cautious, and upon our Guard, in receiving Doctrines, and not easily to give up our Assent to every Tale that is told us, is a Point of great Prudence, and very requisite, in such a Multiplicity of Opinions as there is in the World, to preserve us from Error. But then, we may carry this Point too far; we may be so scrupulous and circumspect in admitting the Testimonies of Men, as to reject some good Witnesses among several bad ones; and to deceive ourselves oftentimes, for very fear of being deceiv'd by others. A general undistinguishing Suspicion is altogether as apt to mislead a Man, as a too easy and unwary Credulity. And to this Excess a Scornor is naturally inclin'd: He is so possess'd with the Notion of *Priestcraft*, and *Pious Frauds*, as to  
 apply


apply it indifferently to all Religions, and to every thing in Religion: He is so afraid of having his Understanding impos'd upon, in Matters of Faith, that he stands equally aloof from all Propositions of that Kind, whether true or false: Which is, as if a Man should refuse to receive any Money at all, because there is a great deal goes about that is false and counterfeit; or resolve not to make a Friendship or Acquaintance with any Man, because many Men are not to be trusted. Certainly this is a very great Instance of Folly; and, in what Breast soever it harbours, cannot but indispose a Man extremely for the Study and Attainment of Religious Wisdom. An Extremity of Suspicion in an Enquirer after Truth, is like a raging Jealousy in an Husband, or a Friend; it leads a Man to turn all his Thoughts towards the ill-natur'd Side, and to put the worst Construction upon every thing; and (in Consequence of that) for once that he is really in the Right, in his Guesses and Cen-

S E R M.  
V.  


S E R M. fures, to be very often, and very much  
 v. in the Wrong.



III. A *Third* Part of the Character of that Man whom we are describing, is, *Falsè Wit*; or a Way of exposing Things sacred and serious, by passing a bold Jest upon them, and ridiculing Arguments, instead of confuting them. The very Name of a *Scornor* will tell us, that this is one of his most belov'd Accomplishments: And, I am sure, it is such an one, as can never help a Man to procure right Impressions of Things, and will scarce ever allow him to improve or preserve them. Wit indeed, as it implies a certain uncommon Reach and Vivacity of Thought, is an excellent Talent; very fit to be employ'd in the Search of Truth, and very capable of assisting us to discern and embrace it: But in the Way in which the Scornor exerts it, the Way of Satire and prophane Drollery, it betrays a Man into a thousand Errors, for one that it discovers to him. Men of quick and lively Parts are apt to give them-

themselves a loose beyond plain Reason S E R M.  
 and common Sense, and to say many v.  
 things not exactly right and true, in order   
 to say somewhat new and surprizing.  
 Their great Aim is, in general, *to please*;  
 and, in order to it, they must bend all  
 their Wit that way, to which the corrupt  
 Nature of Man is inclin'd, and be sure  
 always to speak *against* that which is up-  
 permost; I mean the Opinions that are  
 most general and prevailing. This gives  
 them a light and trifling, instead of a se-  
 rious and manly Frame of Spirit; and  
 makes them think, they have answer'd  
 all the wisest Reasons that can be brought  
 for any thing, if they have but clapp'd a  
*Nickname* upon it, and dress'd up a grave  
 and venerable Truth in so odd a Disguise  
 as to raise Mirth and Laughter from it.  
 Thus a late Person, eminent for Wit and  
 Wickedness, till a Death-bed made him  
 more serious, and gave him truer Appre-  
 hensions of Things, us'd to please him-  
 self mightily with this Thought, that  
 the doing of a Miracle was only another  
 Phrase for the *shewing of a Trick*: And



S E R M. having once represented the Thing to  
 v. himself under such a light Image, he  
 ~~~~~ could hardly be brought to think reverently ever afterwards; or to allow the strongest Arguments which could be brought for the Truth of Miracles, a due and impartial Consideration. And thus also the great Leader of the Libertines of this Age (whom we have already had Occasion to mention) made Sport with the Doctrine of the *Divinity* of Christ, by translating, after an absurd manner, the *Greek Word* λόγος, (which St. *John* applies to him) and assuring us, that That Appellation given to our Saviour, was, in our Tongue, as much to say, the *Verb of God*. And this vain and blasphemous Criticism he thought sufficient to overthrow a prime Article of the Christian Faith. In the same manner he pretended to ridicule the Doctrine of Grace, by enquiring into the Meaning of two Words, generally used by Divines concerning it, to wit, *Infusion* and *Inspiration*; and by informing us, that they signified, in plain *English*, *Impouring* and *Inblowing*.

*Inblowing.* I bring these Instances to S E R M.  
 shew, how far a Scornor may be led out v.  
 of the Way of Truth, by a little Knack of  
 playing upon Things and Words, which  
 he miscalls *Wit*; and upon which he shall  
 value himself more, and be wiser in his  
 own Conceit than *seven Men that can*  
*render a Reason.*

The *Fourth* and last Thing, from IV.  
 whence we propos'd to give an account of  
 his Deceptions, was *Sensuality*: and whe-  
 ther this too doth not, for the most Part,  
 accompany a Contempt of Religion, I  
 appeal to the Observation and Experience  
 of every one that hears me. Look round  
 the World, and you shall seldom find a  
 Man loose in his Principles, who is not  
 so likewise in Manners. There may pos-  
 sibly be, now and then in an Age, an  
 Instance of some cold Phlegmatick Man  
 that shall set up for overturning Religion  
 and Morality, merely for the Sake of  
 Contradiction, or to get himself a Name  
 by it, without the Design of indulging  
 his own Appetites in so doing: But this

S E R M. is a very rare Case ; generally the *Scorn-*


V. *ers* are, as St. *Peter* and St. *Jude* have  
 in their several Epistles agreed to de-  
 scribe them, *Men, who walk after their*  
 2 Pet. iii. *own Lusts.* Accordingly, we may ob-  
 Jude 13.

serve, that this scorning Humour hath been most prevalent in those Ages of the World, in which the Love of Pleasure, and the Arts of Ease and Luxury did most abound ; and is commonly incident to Men, at that Time of their Lives, when their Lusts are most ungoverned, and their Blood boils hottest. 'Tis chiefly the young robust Sinner that indulges himself in it, *whilst* he is in the midst of his Enjoyments : For though a Man may continue in the Practice of this impious Folly to the very End of his Life, yet the Habit itself is generally formed much earlier.

Now the Sensual Man is, of all Men living, the most improper for Enquiries after Truth, and the least at Leisure for it. He is never sedate and cool ; and therefore not able to fix  
 his

his Attention to a Point, and go through S F R M.  
with it. He is never disinterested and V.  
impartial; and, therefore, not capable  
of deliberating freely. He is already  
under the Dominion and Power of his  
own Lusts; and perhaps likes to be so,  
and is very unwilling to shake off his  
Chains. Now such a Man, so quali-  
fied, is, no doubt, a very incompetent  
Judge of Divine Truth, and very unfit  
to consider the Pleas that are brought  
for it. His Search into these Things  
is like to be with no great Evenness  
and Fairness: How can it, when he comes  
with strong Wishes, that he may find  
it all a Mistake? Indeed, when a Man  
allows himself in all Sorts of Impuri-  
ties, and is determined to go on in  
them; and yet finds himself under the  
troublesome Restraint of Principles, and  
the Dread of Religion, which hangs con-  
tinually over him; the only way for him  
to pursue his Enjoyments, and yet be  
easy, is, to set his Face directly against  
the Doctrines of Religion, that give him  
any Check or Disturbance, and resolve to

S E R M. get rid of them as soon as he can. And

v. he may put the Thoughts, which arise in  
 him upon this Occasion, together, and make a Book of them, if he pleases; and then tell us, that this is a sober Enquiry after Truth, and a free Discussion of the Point in Debate; but there is nothing of that in it: He thinks of Truth, just as a Man doth of his Enemy, with Spite and Anger, and a Design only of finding out whatever may blast and expose it. This is a strange contumelious way of treating Divine Things, and wou'd tempt even a good Man to return the Affronts done to Virtue and Piety, by opening the Characters of those who do them; in which we should commonly find, that Sensuality and Looseness of Life had a very great and particular Share. But some Men, who write pretended *Histories of Religion*, are beholden to the real Religion of others that their Histories are not written.

Thus have I run through those four several Properties, which remarkably belong to the Character of *a Scornor*; and  
 shown

shewn you, how each of them contri- s E R M.  
butes to misinform and mislead him in v.  
his Pursuit of Wisdom; so that, suppo-  
sing him really and in good Earnest to seek  
it, yet, thus setting out, and thus qualified,  
it is not at all probable that he should find  
it.


And now the plain and obvious Use  
we are to make of this Discourse, is, to  
satisfy ourselves from hence, how it  
hath come to pass, that the true Reli-  
gion, all along, in the several Ages of  
the World, hath not been entertain'd  
by many of the seemingly Wittiest and  
Wiseest among the Children of Men.  
To this startling Question we can now  
give a short and easy Answer, from  
the Observation of the Text, *They were  
Scorners.* They were either *Proud*  
and Opinionative Men, that could not  
endure to learn plain humble Lessons  
of Piety and Goodness, especially from  
such as they had no Esteem of, no  
Value for: Or their Minds were  
tainted with an ill-natured and unrea-  
sonable *Suspicion*, which, from finding  
out

S E R M. out some Cheats in Religion, led them

v. to pronounce all Religion a Cheat.

They had a Talent perhaps, at *ridiculing* honest Rules and Maxims. and making Sport with Things sacred and serious; and, therefore, to have own'd any fix'd Scheme of Religious Principles, would have been a mighty Damp to their Imaginations, and have taken away from them the Subject of above half their Wit and Pleasantness. Or, lastly, They were Men of *sensual* and *impure Lives*, who were resolv'd to make their Opinions and their Pleasures as consistent as they could; and who therefore, were oblig'd, in point of Interest, to disbelieve every thing that made against them.

This is the short and true Account of the Matter; and will appear to be so, if we cast our Eyes backward on the Story of the World, and consider, who they have been, that have rejected the true Religion, all along from the Creation down to this Time.

In the Old World, *Noah*, who was S E R M.  
the only Man that preserv'd the Wor- v.  
ship of the True God in his Family,   
seems to have been an honest plain-  
hearted Man; *just and perfect in his* Gen. vi 9.  
*Generation*, (as he is describ'd in Scrip-  
ture) *and walking with God*. The rest  
of the World are said to have eaten and  
drunken, to have married and been  
given in Marriage, *i. e.* they were Men  
who liv'd in all the Enjoyments of Sense,  
who revell'd, and took their Fill of all  
the Good Things of this World; and,  
to be sure, were very merry, and very  
bitter upon those that did not. How  
did they deride that Grave Preacher of  
Righteousness, and his Precise Family,  
when He and his Sons talk'd to them  
of Righteousness, Temperance, and Judg-  
ment! Especially, when he told them  
that there was such a Flood coming,  
and that he was building that Ark to  
preserve himself and his Household, what  
a Jest was he to the Men of Parts and  
Pleasure! How many Scornful and Gay  
Things were said upon this Occasion,  
while



S E R M. while the Work went forward by Those,  
 v. who thought themselves very Wise, and  
 ~~~~~ Him very foolish! But the Fountains of  
 the great deep were broken up, and the  
 Windows of Heaven open'd; and Then  
 they began to change their Opinions  
 when (alas!) it was too late to learn.

In the next great Period after the  
 Flood, the true Religion was confin'd to  
 the single Nation of the *Jews*: and one  
 may think it strange at first sight, that  
 if it were the True Religion, it should  
 be so confined; that the wise and knowing  
 Part of Mankind should not discern the  
 Strength of the Evidence that was brought  
 for the Divine Original of the Law of  
*Moses*, nor receive the God of *Israel* for  
 Their God. But, if we consider a little  
 farther, we shall be satisfied, that the true  
 Reason of Mens Infidelity, throughout  
 this long Period of Time, was, a Mean  
 and Contemptuous Notion they had en-  
 tertain'd of the *Jewish* People, and of their  
 Rites and Ceremonies. The Wise Men  
 of the *East*, in the Earliest Ages, and the  
 Philosophers of the *West*, in Later Times,  
 had

had too high an Opinion of themselves, and too low an one of that Little, Narrow-soul'd Superstitious Nation, to submit themselves to be taught by them. The *Jews* were a Proverb and a By-word to the rest of the World, the perpetual Subject of their Scorn and Reproach: And who can think (may we suppose one of these Wise Heathens to have said) that Truth should lie hid among such an odd sort of People, in such a little Spot of the Word?

And thus, again, when Christianity first appear'd, it made no great Progress among the Disputers of this World, among the Men of Wit and Subtlety, for this very Reason; *because* they were Scor-ners. The Gospel was to the *Jews* (to the most Learned and Proud Sect among the *Jews*, the *Pharisees*, a *stumbling block*;) and to those of higher Repute among the *Greeks*, *foolishness*. The great Pretenders to Knowledge every where unanimously contemn'd and derided it, as a poor and low System of Principles; and could never once think of humbling their Minds,

S E R M.  
v.  
~~~~~

1 Cor. i.


23.

S E R M. Minds, to entertain the Simplicity of the  
v. Gospel.



How should the Great Lords of the Earth, who swarm in all the Delights of Sense, and thought themselves born to enjoy them, submit to be talk'd out of their Pleasures and their Privileges by a few Ignorant Fishermen, and Tent-makers? The Story of the Propagation of the Gospel in *Jewry*, might perhaps make a part of the Conversation in the Court of *Tiberius*; it was, probably, such a Subject of Discourse to Them, as the *Quietists* in *Italy* were to Us, at their first appearing. The Novelty of the Thing might occasion some Reflections and Enquiries: But it was not to be expected, that Men of Pleasure and Parts should give themselves the Trouble of Examining nicely into the Pretensions with which this New Religion set up, or of considering, in good Earnest, whether they ought to become Profelytes to it.

We are not to wonder, therefore, if, in some Ages after Christianity, we find  
not

not much said to the Advantage of it, in S E R M.  
 the Writings of those Eminent *Greeks* v.  
 and *Romans*, who are allow'd to have   
 been the best Masters of Polite Thought  
 and Expression. Alas! *Porphyry* must  
 have been contented to confess the Va-  
 nity of Philosophy, and *Lucian* must in  
 great measure have forgone his Skill in  
 Satire; the Witty Libertines of those  
 Times must have parted with much of  
 the Esteem they had, and with most of  
 their Pleasures, if they had once admit-  
 ted the Truth of Christianity: And,  
 therefore, they agreed in running down  
 the Reputation of that, lest they should  
 lose their Own.


And, as it was immediately after our  
 Saviour's coming, so hath it been ever  
 since, to this very Day. The Doctrines  
 of the Cross have never in any Age met,  
 nor will they ever in any future Age,  
 meet with a kind and hearty Reception,  
 among Those, who *fit in the Seat of the*  
*Scorners.*

But let us not therefore be dejected,  
 because there are Many whom the World  
 esteems

SERM. esteems, who yet esteem not Us, and  
 v. our Holy and Undeiled Religion! Nei-  
 ~~~~~ ther let us suspect ourselves, as being  
 out of the way and impos'd upon, because  
 Men of a greater Reach perhaps, and of  
 a more improv'd Understanding than We,  
 are not of our Mind. *Solomon*, who was  
 certainly a Man of Understanding, and  
 who was of our Mind, doth, in a very  
 few Words (which I cannot repeat too  
 often) afford us a full and comfortable  
 Solution of the Case; *A Scornor* (saith  
 he) *seeketh Wisdom, and findeth it not.*


From the Account of former Times it  
 appears to us, that thus it always *hath*  
*been*; and from Reflections on the Nature  
 of Man, that thus it necessarily *must be*;  
 and, therefore, let us possess our Souls in  
 Patience and Peace; and go on in the  
 plain Paths of Godliness and Honesty,  
 without turning to the Right, or to the  
 Left, for whatever Men scornfully witty  
 can say of us, or to us.

Let us beg of Him, *who scorneth the*  
 Prov. iii. *Scorners, but giveth Grace unto the Low-*  
 34. *ly,* let us beg of him to Bestow on us, to  
 Preserve,

Preserve, and Increase in us that *serious* S E R M.  
*and humble* Frame of Spirit, which alone V.  
 can qualify us for a Right Apprehension   
 of the Truths and Mysteries of the Gos-  
 pel; and which is, therefore, certainly,  
 Preferable to all other Endowments of  
 Mind, however the World may have mis-  
 plac'd the greatest Part of its Esteem upon  
 them.

And let us, in order to this End,  
 frequently take to ourselves the hum-  
 ble Words of the *Son of Syrach*, and  
 say, *O Lord, Father and God of my Life*, Eccles. xxiii. 4.  
*give me not a proud Look; but turn* 5, 6.  
*away from thy Servant always an haugh-*  
*ty Mind! Turn away from me vain Hopes*  
*and Concupiscence, and thou shalt hold him*  
*up that is desirous always to serve thee!*  
*Let not the Greediness of the Belly, nor*  
*Lust of the Flesh take hold of me; and*  
*give not over Me thy Servant to an Im-*  
*pudent Mind!*

And as for those who contemn Us,  
 and Our Narrow Principles, and who  
 make us their Derision daily, let us  
 (in the Words of the Apostle) *not cease* Eph. i. 16, 17.  
 VOL, I. O to 18.

S E R M. *to make mention of them in our Prayers,*  
V. *that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,*  
 *the Father of Glory, may give unto them*  
*the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation to*  
*the Acknowledgment of him: The Eyes*  
*of their Understanding being enlightned, that*  
*they may know, what is the Hope of his*  
*Calling, and what the Riches of the Glory*  
*of his Inheritance in the Saints.*

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A  
DISCOURSE

Occasioned by the

DEATH

Of the Right Honourable


The Lady *CUTTS*,

An. Dom. M.DC.XCVIII.

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ECCLES. vii. 2.

*It is better to go to the House of Mourning, than to go to the House of Feasting: for that is the End of all Men; and the Living will lay it to Heart.*

THE first Step towards Happiness SERM.  
 is, to correct our false Opinions VI.  
 concerning it, by learning to esteem   
 O 2 every



SERM. every thing, not according to that Rate  
 VI. and Value, which the World, or our  
 own mistaken Imaginations may have  
 plac'd upon it, but according to that  
 which in itself, and in the Accounts  
 of right Reason and Religion, it really  
 bears.

The Preacher therefore hath, in this Chapter, laid together a Set of Religious Paradoxes, which, however they may startle and shock us a little, upon the first hearing, yet, when closely examin'd, will appear to be clear unquestionable Truths, by which the whole Course of our Lives ought to be steer'd and govern'd.


In the first Verse of this Chapter (the Verse before the Text) he tells us, that *a Good Name is better than precious Ointment, and the Day of one's Death than the Day of one's Birth. A Good Name is better than precious Ointment; i. e.* rich Oils, and sweet Odors (in the Use of which the People of the *East* much delighted) are not half so grateful, or valuable, as a good Reputation, well founded:  
 This

This is more truly fragrant, more diffusive of its Influence, more durable: It gives a Man greater Comfort and Refreshment, while he is Living; and preserves him, when Dead, better than the most precious Embalmings. SERM. VI.

And again, *The Day of one's Death is better than the Day of one's Birth*; i. e. the *Day of the Death* of such an one, as possesses and deserves a *Good Name*; of such an one, as hath liv'd well, and dy'd well, is preferable by far to the *Day of his Birth*: For it gives him Admittance into a State of perfect Rest and Tranquillity, of undisturb'd Joy and Happiness; whereas the Day of his Birth was only an Inlet into a troublesome World, and the Beginning of Sorrows.

And then it follows, very naturally, in the Words of the Text, that *It is better also to go to the House of Mourning, than to go to the House of Feasting*. As Death to a good Man is more advantageous than Life; so to a wise Man the Contemplation of the first is more desirable than all the Enjoyments of the

SERM. Latter: He had much rather be present

VI.  at the sad Solemnities of a Funeral, than partake of those Festival Rejoicings, which are usual in all Nations, but especially among the *Jews*, at the Birth of a Child.

Hard Doctrine this, to the Men of Liberty and Pleasure! who have said to themselves, *Come on, let us enjoy the things that are present, let us fill our selves with costly Wine and Ointments, and let no Flower of the Spring pass by us; let us Crown ourselves with Rosebuds before they be withered.* Hard Doctrine, I say, it is to such Men as these; and which will run the Hazard of not being entertain'd by them. The Wise Man therefore hath condescended to prove, as well as assert it, and to back the severe Rule he hath laid down, with very convincing Reasons: *For that, saith he, is the End of all Men, and the Living will lay it to heart.* As if he had said, This Dark and Melancholy State it will one Day certainly come to Our share to try; and what must some time

or

or other be undergone, ought to be considered beforehand: this is *the End of all Men*; and all Men therefore should have their Eye and their Thoughts upon it. And then farther ---- We are most of us so immers'd in the Pleasures, and so taken up with the Follies of Life, that we need all Methods of reducing our straggling Thoughts and Desires, and of giving ourselves a serious Frame and Composure of Mind: and of all Methods, this of repairing to the House of Mourning, is best adapted to that Good End, and will soonest and most effectually bring it about; *The Living will lay it to Heart.*

I have largely explain'd the Connexion and Meaning of the Words, which have been pitched upon to employ Your Thoughts on this mournful Occasion. The next thing should be, to excite You to a Compliance with the Direction there given, by the particular Arguments suggested in the Text, and by several other powerful and moving Considerations: to prove to You, the Folly and

SER M. Emptiness of a Life led all in Mirth, and  
 VI. Jollity, and Pleasure; the Wisdom and  
 Reasonableness of shifting the Scene  
 sometimes, of turning the gloomy side  
 of Things towards ourselves, of ex-  
 changing *the House of Feasting* for *the*  
*House of Mourning*, and of making a  
 discreet and decent Use of those sad  
 Opportunities of Reflection, which God,  
 mercifully severe, is pleas'd to put into  
 our Hands.

But I am prevented in this part of my  
 Discourse, by the Pious Design of this  
 present Assembly; You are already do-  
 ing that which I should recommend to  
 You from the Text; paying the Tribute  
 of Your Tears to the Memory of One,  
 whose Worth you knew, and whose Loss  
 You sensibly feel; and bewailing Her,  
 under the different Characters She bore  
 of a Wife, a Daughter, a Relation, a  
 Mistress, a Friend.

All, therefore, I have to do, on this  
 Occasion, is, to fall in with Your Pious  
 Grief, already rais'd, and to bear a Part  
 in it, by dwelling together with You a  
 while

while on the Character of that *Imcomparable Lady*, whose Death we lament; by uniting, as well as I am able, the scatter'd Parts of it, and recalling to Your Thoughts at once the several Excellencies and Perfections of which it was compos'd: which made her belov'd and reverenc'd by You while Living, and will make her Memory ever Dear and Desirable to You, now she is Dead; and which rais'd her above the greatest Part of her Sex, much more than any Outward Marks of Rank and Distinction.

SERM.

VI.



It is now, after her Decease, a fit Time to speak of her in those Terms of Respect which she deserv'd: for in her Life-time she would not suffer it, and took some Pains to avoid it; hiding as many of her Virtues as she could from Publick Observation, and so behaving herself in the Practice of those she could not hide, as shew'd, she had no mind to be told of them: discountenancing, as far as lay in her Power, that odious and designing Flattery, which, through the wicked Fashion of an Insincere World, is now thought

S E R M. thought to be a kind of Customary Debt  
 VI. due to her Sex, and almost a necessary  
 ~~~~~ Part of good Breeding.

But though the Living can seldom be prais'd with Decency, yet the Dead certainly often may; especially such of the Dead, as had a very unusual Degree of Indifference and Unconcernedness for what was said to their Advantage, while they were Living.

There is a publick Homage due to Desert, if we take a proper Season of paying it; and the Ministers of the Gospel, who are entrusted with so many Methods of promoting Piety in the World, are, among the rest, entrusted with This, of *giving Honour where Honour is due*; and of truly representing to the Minds of Men such shining Patterns of Virtue, as are most likely to engage their Attention, and provoke their Imitation: It is our immediate and particular Employment to praise God; and it doth, no doubt, in some measure also belong to us, to praise those that are Like him:

And

And now how shall I enter upon this fruitful Argument? What Particular of her comprehensive Character shall I first chuse to insist on? Let us Determine our selves to begin there where she always began, at her Devotions. In these she was very Punctual and Regular: Morning and Evening came not up more constantly in their Course, than her stated Hours of Private Prayer; which she observ'd not formally, as a Task, but return'd to them always with Desire, Delight, and Eagerness. She would on no Occasion dispense with herself from paying this Duty: no Business, no common Accident of Life could divert her from it: She esteem'd it her great Honour and Happiness to attend upon God; and she resolv'd to find Leisure for That, for whatever else she might want it.

How she behav'd herself in these Secret Transactions, between God and her own Soul, is known to Him alone whom She worshipp'd: But, if we may guess at her Privacies by what was seen of her in Publick, we may be sure, that she was  
full


S E R M.

VI.





SERM. full of Humility, Devotion, and Fervency;

VI.  cy; for so she remarkably was always, during the time of Divine Service. Her Behaviour was then very devout and solemn, and yet the most decent, easy, and unaffected, that could be; there was nothing in it either negligent and loose, or extravagant and strain'd: it was throughout such, as declar'd itself not to be the Work of the Passions, but to flow from the Understanding, and from a clear Knowledge of the true Grounds and Principles of that her reasonable Service.

This Knowledge she attain'd by early Instructions, by much Reading, and Meditation, (to which she appear'd from her Childhood to be addicted) and, give me leave to add, by a very diligent and exact Attendance on the Lessons of Piety which were utter'd from the Pulpit; which no one practis'd better, because no one delighted in, listen'd to, or consider'd more. For at these Performances, she was all Attention, all Ear; she kept her Heart fix'd and intent on its holy Work, by keeping her Eye from wandering.

It

It was her Misfortune indeed, that the SERM.  
Exemplariness of her Behaviour call'd off VI.  
the Eyes of several to observe it; but  
more Her, and their Misfortune, that,  
when they had seen it, and satisfy'd their  
Curiosity, they did not go on also to  
imitate it. She often express'd her Dis-  
satisfaction at that Indecency of Car-  
riage which universally prevails in our  
Churches; and wonder'd that They  
should be most careless of their Beha-  
viour towards God, who are most scru-  
pulously nice in exacting and paying all  
the little Decencies that are in Use among  
Men.

When the Bread of Life was distri-  
buted, she was sure to be there, a devout  
and never-failing Communicant; and  
the Strictness of her Attention, and the  
Reverence of her Behaviour were, if it  
were possible, rais'd and improv'd on  
those Occasions: The lively Image of a  
crucify'd Saviour, then exhibited, could  
not but make very moving Impressions  
on a Mind that abounded with so much  
pious Warmth and Tendernefs.

SERM. Books she took Pleasure in, and made

IV. good Use of; chiefly Books of Divinity,  
 and Devotion; which she studied, and re-  
 lished above all others. History too had  
 very often a Share in her Reflections; and  
 sometimes she look'd into Pieces of pure  
 Diversion and Amusement, whenever she  
 found them written in such a Way, as  
 to be innocently entertaining. I need not  
 tell You, to how narrow a Choice she  
 was, by this means, confin'd.

But of all Books, the Book of God  
 was That, in which she was most de-  
 lighted and employ'd; and which was  
 never, for any considerable time, out of  
 her Hands. No doubt, she knew, and  
 felt the great Use and sweet Influence of  
 it, in calming her Mind, and regulating  
 her Desires, and lifting up her Thoughts  
 towards Heaven, in feeding and spreading  
 that Holy Flame, which the Love of God  
 had kindled in her Heart, and which she  
 took care, by this means, to keep perpetually burning.

When she met with any thing there,  
 or in any other pious Book, which would  
 be

be of remarkable Use to her in the Conduct of her Life and Affairs, she trusted not her Memory with it; not even that excellent Memory, which she safely trusted with Things of lesser Moment; but immediately committed it to Writing. Many Observations of this kind she hath left, drawn from good Authors, but chiefly from those Sacred Pages; in collecting which, whether her Judgment, or her Piety, had the largest Share, it is not easy to say.

The Passages of Holy Writ which she took Notice of, were indeed commonly such, as related either to the Concerns of her Spiritual Estate, or to Matters of Prudence: but it appears also that she spent some time in meditating on those Places where the Sublimeſt Points of Chriſtian Doctrin<sup>e</sup> are contain'd, and in poſſeſſing her ſelf with a deep Senſe of the wonderful Love of God towards us, manifeſted in the myſterious Work of our Redemption; for ſhe had ſomething more than what, in the Language of this looſe Age, is call'd, *a Lady's Religion*.

SERMON. She endeavour'd to understand the

VI. great Articles of Faith, as well as to  
 ~~~~~ practise the good Rules of Life, contain'd  
 in the Gospel; and she sensibly found,  
 that the best way to excite herself to the  
 Practice of the one, was to endeavour to  
 understand the other.

And in this Book of God she was more particularly conversant on God's Day; a Day ever held sacred by her, and which, therefore, always in her Family wore a Face of Devotion suitable to the Dignity of it. It was truly a Day of Rest to all under her Roof: her Servants were then dismiss'd from a good part of their Attendance upon her, that they might be at Liberty to attend on their great Lord and Master, whom both She, and They, were equally bound to obey. There was such a Silence and Solemnity at that time observ'd by all about her, as might have become the *House of Mourning*; and yet so much Ease and Serenity visible in their Looks (at least in her Looks there was) as shew'd, that They, who were in the *House of Feasting*, were not better satisfy'd.

tisfy'd. Thus did she prepare and dispose S E R M.  
herself for the Enjoyment of that perfect VI.  
Rest, the Celebration of that endless Sab-  
bath, which she is now enter'd upon ;  
thus did she practise beforehand upon  
Earth, the Duties, the Devotions, the  
Customs, and Manners of Heaven.

To secure her Proficiency in Virtue,  
she kept an exact Journal of her Life ; in  
which was contain'd the History of all  
her Spiritual Affairs, and of the several  
Turns that happen'd in her Soul : A true,  
naked, impartial History ! and yet, (which  
feldom happens in true ones) such an one,  
where the Person describ'd is not charg'd  
with many Blemishes and Failings. Alas  
for Us, that the Thread of it was no  
longer continu'd !

In this Glass she every Day dress'd her  
Mind, to this faithful Monitor she re-  
pair'd for Advice and Direction ; com-  
par'd the past with the present, judg'd of  
what would be, by what had been, ob-  
serv'd nicely the several successive De-  
grees of Holiness she got, and of Hu-  
man Infirmary she shook off ; and trac'd

S E R M. every single Step she took onward in her

VI. Way towards Heaven.



One would have imagin'd, that so much Exactness and Severity in private should have affected a little her publick Actions and Discourses, and have slid insensibly into her Carriage; and yet nothing could be more free, simple, and natural. She had the Reality, without the Outside and Shew of Strictness: all her Rules, all her Performances sat so well and graceful upon her, that they appear'd to be as much her Pleasure as her Duty; She was, in the midst of them, perfectly easy to her self, and a Delight to all that were about her: ever Cheerful in her Behaviour, but withal ever Calm and Even; her Satisfaction, like a deep untroubled Stream, ran on, without any of that Violence, or Noise, which sometimes the shallowest Pleasures do most abound in.

However, Cheerful and Agreeable as she was, yet she never carried her good Humour so far, as to smile at a Prophane, an Ill-natur'd, or an Unmannerly Jest;

on

on the contrary, in her highest Mirth, it S E R M.  
made her remarkably Grave and Serious. V I.  
She had an extraordinary Nicety of Temper as to all the least Approaches to Faults of that kind, and shew'd a very quick and sensible Concern at any thing, which she thought it did not become either her to hear, or others to say.


True Piety, which consists chiefly in an Humility and Submission of Mind towards God, is attended always with Humility and Goodness towards his Creatures; and so it was in this *Excellent Lady*. Never was there a more deep, and unfeign'd, and artless Lowliness of Mind seen in her Rank and Station: As far as she was plac'd above the most of the World, she convers'd as it were upon the Level with all of them; and yet, when she stooped the lowest towards them, she took care even at that time to preserve the Respect that was due to her from them. She had so much true Merit, that she was not afraid of being look'd into, and therefore durst be familiar: And the Effect of that Familiarity



S E R M. was, that, by being better known, she  
 VI. was more lov'd and valu'd. Not only  
 ~~~~~ no one of her Inferiors ever came uneasy  
 from her, (as hath been said of some  
 Great Ones;) but no one ever went un-  
 easy to her; so assured were all before-  
 hand of her Sweetness of Temper, and  
 obliging Reception! When she open'd  
 her Lips, Gracious Words always pro-  
 ceeded from thence, and *in her Tongue*  
*was the Law of Kindness*. Her Refer-  
 vedness, and Love of Privacy, might pos-  
 sibly be misinterpreted sometimes for an  
 Overvalue of herself, by those who did  
 not know her; but the least Degree of  
 Acquaintance made all those Suspicions  
 vanish. For, tho' her Perfections both of  
 Body and Mind were very extraordina-  
 ry, yet she was the only Person that  
 seem'd, without any Endeavour to seem,  
 insensible of them. She was, 'tis true,  
 in as much Danger of being Vain, as  
 great Beauty, and a good Natural Wit  
 could make her: But she had such an  
 Over-balance of Discretion, that she was  
 never in Pain to have the one seen, or  
 the

the other heard. Indeed, this was parti-  
 cular to her, and a very distinguishing Part  
 of her Character, that she never studied  
 Appearances, nor made any Advances to-  
 wards the Opinion of the World; being  
 contented to *be* whatever was Good or  
 Deserving, without endeavouring in the  
 least to be *thought* so: and this, not out of  
 any affected Disregard to Publick Esteem,  
 but merely from a Modesty and Easiness  
 of Nature, which made her give way to  
 others, who were more willing to be ob-  
 serv'd. And yet she had also her Hours  
 of Openness and Freedom, when her Soul  
 eas'd it self to Familiars and Friends; and  
 then *out of the good Treasure of her Heart*  
*what good Things* did she *bring forth*?  
 And with what Delight was she listned to  
 by those who had the Happiness to con-  
 verse with her? So that a Doubt it is,  
 whether she were most to be admired  
 for what she did, or for what she did  
 not say. It was wonderful that One,  
 who, when she pleas'd, could discourse  
 so fitly and so freely, should yet chuse  
 to be silent on so many Occasions; and

SERM. it was surprizing that She, who was

VI. such a Lover of Silence, should, when-  
 ever she spake, charm all that heard  
 her.

We may be sure, that, whilst she thus commanded her Tongue, she kept as strict and watchful a Guard upon her Passions; those especially of the rough and troublesome kind, with which she was scarce ever seen to be disquieted. She knew not what the Disorders of Anger were, even on Occasions that might seem to justify, if not to require it: As much as she hated Vice, she chose rather to look it out of Countenance, than to be severe against it; and to win the bad over to the Side of Virtue by her Example, than by her Rebukes.

Her sweet Deportment towards Those who were with her, could be outdone by nothing but her Tenderness in relation to the Absent; whom she was sure to think, and speak as well of as was possible: And when their Character was plainly such, as could have no good Colours put upon it, yet she would shew  
 her

her Dislike of it no otherwise than by saying nothing of them. Neither her Good-Nature, nor her Religion, neither her Civility, nor her Prudence, would suffer her to censure any one: She thought she had enough to do at home, in that way, without looking much abroad; and therefore turn'd the Edge of all her Reflections upon her self. Indeed she spar'd others as much as if she had been afraid of them, and her self as little, as if she had had many Faults that wanted mending: And yet, 'twas because she could, after the severest Scrutiny, find no great Harm in her self, that she could scarce be brought to suspect any in others.

Her Conversation might, for this Reason, seem to want somewhat of that Salt and Smartness, which the ill-natur'd Part of the World are so fond of; a Want, that she could easily have supply'd, would her Principles have given her leave: but her settled Opinion was, that the Good Name of any one was too nice and serious a thing to be play'd with; and that it was a foolish kind of Mirth, which, in

S R M.

IV.



SERM. order to divert some, hurt others. She

VI. could never bring her self to think, that  
 ~~~~~ the only thing which gave Life and Spirit  
 to Discourse, was, to have Somebody's  
 Faults the Subject of it; or, that the Plea-  
 sure of a Visit lay, in giving up the Com-  
 pany to one anothers Sport and Malice,  
 by turns. And if these are the chief  
 Marks of Wit and Good-breeding, it must  
 be confess'd that she had neither.

With all this Goodness, Gentleness,  
 and Meekness of Nature, she had at the  
 same time a Degree of Spirit and Firm-  
 ness, unusual in her Sex; and was parti-  
 cularly observ'd to have a wonderful Pre-  
 sence of Mind in any Accident of Danger:  
 for Innocence and Courage are nearly  
 ally'd, and even in the softest Tempers,  
 where the one of these is in Perfection,  
 there will and must be a good Degree of  
 the other.

Shall I say any thing of that innate  
 Modesty of Temper, and spotless Purity  
 of Heart, which shone throughout her  
 whole Life and Conversation? A Quality  
 so strictly requir'd of her Sex, that it may  
 be


be thought not so properly commendable s E R M.  
 in any of them to have it, as infamous to want it. However, in the most common VI.  
 and ordinary Graces, there are uncommon Heights and Degrees; and it was the particular Happiness of this *Lady* Remarkably to excel in every Virtue that belong'd to her; even in those, in which Christians of the lowest Attainments do in some degree Excel.

Shall I add, that this Love of Purity was the Cause, why she banish'd her self from those Publick Diversions of the Town, at which it was scarce possible to be present, without hearing somewhat that wounded chaste Ears; and for which, she thought, no Amends could be made to Virtue by any degree of Wit, or Humour, with which, perhaps, they might otherwise abound? These good Qualities, she knew, serv'd only to recommend the Poison, and make it palatable; and, therefore, she thought it a Piece of Service to other People, (who might perhaps be influenc'd by her Example) to stand off, tho' she her self were secur'd from

SERM. from the Infection. This, questionless,

VI. was One Reason of her allowing her  
~~~~~ self in those dangerous Entertainments so sparingly; but it was but One of Many: She had really neither Relish nor Leisure for them; nor for a thousand other things, which the World miscalls Pleasures. Not that she wanted naturally a Taste for any thing of this kind; for her Apprehension was fine, and her Wit very good, and very ready at Command, whenever she pleas'd to exercise it: but she had turn'd her Thoughts so much towards Things of Use and Importance, that Matters of mere Pleasure grew flat and indifferent to her; She was so taken up with the Care of improving her Understanding, and bettering her Life, in the Discharge of the Offices necessary to her Rank, in the Duties of her Closet, and the Concerns of her Family, that, she found, at the Foot of the Account, but little Time (and had less Mind) to give in to those vain Amusements.

She did not think it (as, I fear, it is too often thought) the peculiar Happi-

ness and Privilege of the Great, to have SERM.  
nothing to do; but took care to fill every VI.  
Vacant Minute of her Life with some   
useful nor innocent Employment. The  
several Hours of the Day had their pecu-  
liar Business allotted to them, (whether  
it were Conversation, or Work, Read-  
ing, or Domestick Affairs) each of which  
came up orderly in its turn; and was, as  
the Wise Man speaks, (to be sure, un-  
der Her Management it was) *beautiful in  
its Season.*

And this Regularity of hers, was free  
and natural, without Formality or Con-  
straint; it was neither troublesome to  
Her, nor to those that were near her:  
When, therefore, any Accident interven'd,  
it was interrupted at that Time with as  
much Ease as it was at other Times prac-  
tis'd: for among all her discretionary  
Rules, the chief was, to seem to have  
none; and to make those she had laid  
down to herself give way always to Cir-  
cumstances and Occasions.


She wrought with her own Hands of-  
ten, when she could more profitably, and  
plea-



S E R M. pleasingly have employ'd her Time in Me-


VI. ditation, or Books: but she was willing  
 ~~~~~ to set an Example to those, who could  
 not; and she took care, therefore, that  
 her Example should be well follow'd by  
 all that were under her immediate Influ-  
 ence: for she knew well, that the  
 Description of a good Wife and a Perfect  
 Woman in the *Proverbs*, (a Description  
 which she much delighted in, and often  
 read) was spent chiefly in commending  
 that Diligence by which *She looketh well  
 to the Ways of her Household, and eateth  
 not the Bread of Idleness*: And she knew  
 likewise also, that the Person, whose  
 Words these are said to be, was no less a  
 Woman than the Mother of King *Lemuel*.

Diligence and Frugality are Sisters:  
 and She, therefore, who was so well ac-  
 quainted with the one, was not likely to  
 be a Stranger to the other. She was strict-  
 ly careful of her Expences; and yet knew  
 how to be generous and to abound, when  
 the Occasion requir'd it. But of all Ways  
 of good Management, she lik'd That the  
 worst which shuts our Hands to the Poor;  
 towards

towards whom she always shew'd herself S E R M.  
 very Compassionate and Charitable. Of VI.  
 the other Delights, with which an high   
 Fortune furnish'd her, she was almost insensible; but on this Account she valu'd it, that it gave her an Opportunity of pursuing the several Pleasures of Beneficence, and of tasting all the Sweets of Well-doing. *She delivered the Poor that cried, and the Fatherless, and Him that had none to help him: The Blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon her, and she caus'd the Widow's Heart to sing.* Very easy, sure, will this make her Audit at the great Day of Account; That Charity will, doubtless, be allow'd to screen her few Infirmities and Faults, which is of Efficacy sufficient to *cover the Multitude of Sins.*

In the Exercise of this, and of all other Virtues, She was wonderfully secret; endeavouring to come up, as near as she could, to the Rule of *not letting her right Hand know what her left Hand did.* And this Secrecy of hers she managed so well, that some of the most  
 remark-

S E R M. remarkable Instances of her Goodness were

IV. not known, till after her Death ; no, not  
 by Him, who was partaker of all her Joys  
 and Sorrows.

Retirement and Privacy she always lov'd, and therefore chose it, when, after the Death of a near Relation, who had the Care of Educating Her, she was at liberty to have liv'd otherwise. From that Time to her Marriage, which was more than Three Years, she hid her self in the Country ; having an early and settled Aversion to the Noise and Inconveniences of a Town-life ; and too little an Opinion of herself, to think, that it was so much the Interest of Virtue and Religion, as it really was, that she should be known and distinguish'd.

When, afterwards, she went to Court, (as it was necessary for Her sometimes to do) she did it with an Air, which plainly shew'd, that she went to pay her Duty there, and not to delight her self in the Pomp and Glitter of that Place. Had she gone thither soon enough to see that *Good and Glorious Queen*, who was the  
 Orna-

Ornament of It, and of her Sex, she had SERM.  
been taken, we may presume, into her VI.  
Intimacy: for their Minds were nearly  
ally'd, and their Characters, and Manners,  
and Ways of Life not unlike; allowing  
for the Difference of Stations.

I need not, I cannot well say more of  
her: and if, therefore, I have fallen short  
of her Character, (as I am sensible I have,  
in many Parts of it, which are here men-  
tion'd, and in others, which are still left  
untouch'd) I desire, those particular De-  
fects may be supply'd from this General  
Account; that she did not, a little re-  
semble *Her*, who was the Pattern of all  
that is Good and Amiable 'in Woman-  
kind.

Whether she had this excellent Pat-  
tern in her Eye, I am not able to say,  
when, soon after her Marriage, she de-  
clar'd to several Friends her Thoughts,  
that Every Woman of Quality was as  
much more Oblig'd, as she was more  
Enabled than other Women, to do Good  
in the World; and that the shortest and  
surest Way of doing this was, to endea-  
vour,

S E R M. your, by all means, to be as good a Christian, and as good a Wife, and as good a Friend, as was possible.

She endeavour'd to be all this, and she fell not far short of it: for she excell'd in all the Characters that belong'd to her, and was in a great measure equal to all the Obligations that she lay under: She was devout, without Superstition; strict, without Ill-humour: good-natur'd, without Weakness; chearful, without Levity; regular, without Affectation. She was, to her Husband the best of Wives, the most agreeable of Companions, and most faithful of Friends; to her Servants, the best of Mistresses; to her Relations, extremely respectful; to her Inferiors, very obliging: and by all that knew her, either nearly, or at a Distance, She was reckon'd, and confess'd to be one of the best of Women.

And yet all this Goodness, and all this Excellence, was bounded within the Compass of eighteen Years, and as many Days: for no longer was she allow'd to live among us. She was snatch'd out of the


the World as soon almost as she had made her Appearance in it; like a Jewel of high Price, just shewn a little, and then put up again; and we were depriv'd of her by that time We had learnt to value her. But Circles may be compleat, tho' small; the Perfection of Life doth not consist in the Length of it: if it did, Our Saviour to be sure would not have dy'd so 'soon after thirty.

S E R M.  
VI.  



Short as her Life was, She had time enough to adorn the several States of Virginity and Marriage; and to experience the Sadness of a kind of Widowhood too: for such she accounted it, when her Lord was long absent from her; mourn'd as much, and refus'd as much to be comforted, till his Return.

As her Life was short, so her Death was sudden; She was call'd away in haste, and without any Warning. One day she droop'd, and the next she dy'd; nor was there the Distance of many Hours between her being very easy in this World, and very happy in another.

S E R M. However, tho' she was seiz'd thus suddenly by Death, yet was she not surpriz'd ;

VI.  for she was ever in Preparation for it ; *her Loins girt, (as the Scripture speaks) and her Lamp ready trimm'd, and burning :* The Moment also that She was taken ill, she was just risen from her Knees, and had made an end of her Morning Devotions. And to such an One a sudden Death could be no Misfortune. We pray, indeed, again'st it, because few, very few, are fit for it ; and the Church is to proportion her Forms to the Generality of Christians : But where a Good Soul is in perfect Readiness, there the sooner the fatal Stroke is struck, the better ; all Delays in this Case, are uncomfortable to the Dying, as well as to those Friends who survive them.

In truth, she could not be call'd away more hastily, than she was willing to go. She had been us'd so much to have *her Conversation in Heaven*, and her Soul had been so often upon the Wing thither, that it readily left its Earthly Station upon the least Notice from Above ; and took  
the

the very first Opportunity of quitting her S E R M.  
Body, without lingering or expecting a se- V I.  
cond Summons. She stay'd no longer af-   
ter she was call'd, than to assure her Lord  
of her entire Resignation to the Divine  
Will; and of her having no manner of  
Uneasiness upon her Mind; and to take  
her Leave of him, with all the Expressions  
of Tenderness. When this was over,  
she had nothing more to do with her  
Senses; she sunk immediately under her  
Illness, and, after a short unquiet Slum-  
ber, slept in Peace.

Thus liv'd, and thus dy'd this Excellent  
Lady, whose Character I have so far repre-  
sented, as my Time, and the Measure of  
such Discourses as these, would suffer me;  
and endeavour'd to renew a faint Image of  
her several Virtues and Perfections upon  
your Minds. I have done it in a confus'd  
manner, and without the nice Divisions of  
Art; for Grief is not Methodical: It is  
enough, if I have been able to set before  
you some Resemblance of her, tho' I  
should not have done it after the best and  
liveliest manner: When the Life is gone,



S E R M. 2 A Picture drawn even by an unskilful

VI. Hand, hath its Use and Value; and those  
 who lov'd what it doth (however unequally) represent, will be touch'd at the Sight of it.

You all are so, I question not, touch'd by what hath been said, in various Manners, and in different Degrees, as Your Relation to her was nearer, or remoter; as you knew more, or less of her. But you do not mourn alone; many *Living* there are, that do now, and many more there are, who shall hereafter, when her Character hath spread itself, *lay it to heart*; The World hath had a Loss, as well as You; True Virtue and Piety have suffer'd in her Fall; and all, therefore, that have any Regard for these, shall bear a Part with You in your Sorrows.

*The True Servants of God shall lay it to heart*, who from their Souls desire the Increase of Religion and Goodness, and know the Power and Influence of so sweet, so winning, so perfect a Pattern as was set by Her; who promis'd Themselves a mighty Countenance, and the  
 World

World strange Advantages, from her ex- S E R M.  
emplary Sanctity and Goodness.

VI.


They that *minister in holy Things* will lay it to heart, to whom she repair'd, with so much Constancy and Seriousness, to hear the Divine Oracles explain'd by them, and to *enquire the Law at their Mouths*. They will consider what an Helper and Furtherer of their pious Labours they have lost; and how much more lifeless and ineffectual their Discourses are now likely to be, than they were heretofore, when she encouraged those Exercises by her Presence, and taught others to attend, by the strict Attention she her self paid to what was said in them. In whatever Congregation she appear'd, she secretly rais'd and improv'd the Devotions of the Place; every Day of her Life preach'd up Goodness, as effectually as the most rational and moving Sermon.

The *Enquirers into the Methods and Mysteries of Divine Providence* will lay it to heart. Why will they say, when God hath most Work to do in the World, is one of the best and most faithful Instru-

SERM. ments of his Glory call'd out of it? Why

VI. is she snatch'd away from us, at a Time  
 when we could least have spar'd her?  
 when Iniquity and Irreligion run high,  
 and Piety is in Danger of growing out of  
 Fashion, and out of Countenance? Why,  
 in such a Juncture, is this *Good Lady*  
 taken? And why are so many of her Sex,  
 so unlike her, left? Is it in Mercy to her,  
 or in Judgment to us? Is it because She  
 was too good to live here, or because  
 We were too wicked to deserve her  
 Company? *Righteous art Thou, O Lord,*  
*when we plead with Thee: yet let Us*  
*talk with Thee of thy Judgments!*

Her *Domestics* will lay it to heart,  
 whom She shone upon always with a sin-  
 gular Goodness; who were near Witnesses  
 of her most retir'd Graces and Virtues;  
 and had the best Opportunities of forming  
 themselves upon her admirable Model:  
 and who will now (alas!) be destitute of  
 her Example and Encouragement; of her  
 sweet Advice, and gentle Reproofs; and  
 will be left to live upon that Stock of Vir-  
 tue, which hath been happily laid in by  
 them,


them, that Measure of Goodness which S E R M.  
They have already deriv'd, from attend- VI.  
ing and observing Her. 

Finally, the *Poor* will lay it to heart,  
whose Bowels she refresh'd, and whose  
Wants she reliev'd; and was ever their  
sure Refuge and Support, their kind and  
merciful Patroness and Friend.

But, above all, her *Relations* will lay it  
to heart; Those, to whom she was most  
nearly join'd by Blood, or Love; and  
who had a more particular Interest in all  
her Virtues; They will lay their Hands on  
their Breasts, in the *Day of Adversity*, and  
consider, How have we offended, that we  
are thus grievously punish'd? and which  
of our Miscarriages is it, that this heavy  
In infliction is intended to reform?

This is the wisest and best Use that can  
be made of such Solemnities as these; not,  
by the means of them, to excite our truly  
pious and Christian Grief to an immode-  
rate and unchristian Degree, nor to *sorrow*  
*as Men without hope*; but to take Occa-  
sion from thence, to search and enquire  
into our selves; to learn the Meaning of  
these

S E R M. these Divine Admonitions; and, after we

VI. have interpreted them truly, to resolve  
 upon obeying them.

The Deceas'd Person, whose Loss we deplore, is happy without Question: Happy will the Living be also, if they thus wisely, thus effectually *lay it to heart!* *It is better, doubtless, to go into the House of Mourning, than into the House of Feasting;* but upon this Condition, that we come better out of the one, than out of the other: That we leave our Vanities and our Vices behind us; that we lay aside our Affections towards this World, and our Indifference towards another; that we put on holy and hearty Resolutions of being even Now, what we shall wish we had been, Hereafter, when the fatal Hour approaches; and of *living the Life* of this *Righteous* Person, that we may *die her Death* too; and be remember'd and lamented, as she is, by those who survive us.

Let us assure ourselves, that the best way of doing Honour to her Memory will be, by making her Character still live in  
 Our

Our Lives and Actions; that the truest Instance of our Love and Esteem of Her is, to endeavour to be like Her: for Thus, we shall even add some farther Degrees of Happiness and Honour to the vast Reward which she is already entitled to; and shall make the Crown of Glory, she is to wear, bright as it will be, yet brighter, in the Day of General Retribution: Till when, (it may be piously suppos'd) the Saints departed are not admitted to the *Fulness of Joy*, that, in the mean time, the Influence of their good Examples and good Deeds spreading far and wide, That too, when their Accounts are made up, may be taken into them; and the Fitness and Proportionableness of their exceeding great Recompence, then bestow'd, may be manifested in the Sight of Angels and Men.

Wherefore, *lift up the Hands that hang down, and the feeble Knees!* Think not so much and so long on the incomparable Character of the Deceas'd, as to forget the true Use You are to make of this afflicting Accident; and to neglect those good Improvements under it, which the

Wife

SERM.

VI.



SERM. Wife and Kind Inflicter expects at Your

VI. Hands. You have paid Your last Respects  
 ~~~~~ to Her, be not now wanting to Your  
 selves; but *Gird up the Loin of Your  
 Mind*, and be ye comforted!

The Consideration of what she was,  
 which afflicts You, should much rather  
 Chear and Revive You: Had She not been  
 so good a Woman, You would with more  
 reason have bewail'd her. But why should  
 You continue to mourn for One, who is  
 enter'd upon a State of unspeakable Joy?  
 Why should You be dejected at Her Ad-  
 vancement?

She is gone to the Place, where all Tears  
 are wip'd from her Eyes; where there is  
 no more Death, nor Sorrow, nor Crying:  
 She is gone, and her Works have follow'd,  
 and will follow her, to her great and End-  
 less Advantage. God grant that, when  
 We also follow her, we may do it with as  
 little Surprize, and as much Chearfulness!

*To Him, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
 be ascrib'd, as is most due, all Ho-  
 nour, Adoration and Thanks, now,  
 and for ever! Amen.*

*The*

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*The Wisdom of Providence manifested in  
the Revolutions of Government.*

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A  
**S E R M O N**

Preach'd before the Honourable  
**HOUSE of COMMONS**  
A T

*St. Margarei's, Westminster,*

*May the 29th, 1701.*

Being the Anniversary for the Restora-  
tion of King **CHARLES** the  
Second.


---

**EZEK. xxxvii. 3.**

*And he said unto me, Son of Man, can  
these Bones live? And I answered, O  
Lord God, thou knowest.*


**T**HESE Words are part of that Vi-  
sion of the *Valley of Bones*, where-  
in the Prophet *Ezekiel* doth, in a very  
lofty

S E R M.  
VII.






SER M. lofty and lively manner, set out the Lost

VII. and Hopeless State of *Israel*, then under  
 Captivity; and their future Recovery out of it, by the immediate Interposition of a Divine Power, contrary to all Human Probability and Appearance.

*The Hand of the Lord was upon me, (says he, at the Entrance of this Chapter) and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of a Valley which was full of Bones: i. e. the Spirit of God represented to my Imagination such a Sight: And (as he goes on) caused me to pass by them round about; and, behold, there were Many in the open Valley, and, lo! they were very Dry: i. e. they were as numerous as the Dispers'd of Israel in the Plains of Mesopotamia, and as destitute of lively Juice and Moisture, as that Exil'd People were of all hopes of Returning. And he said unto me, Son of Man, can these Bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest: i. e. Thou, that art the Author and Bestower of Life, canst doubtless restore it also, if thou will'st; and when thou will'st; but whether thou will'st*

*in the Revolutions of the Government.* 249.

will't please to restore it, or not, That SERM.  
Thou alone knowest. After which, the VII.


Spirit commands him to *Prophecy upon* 

*those Bones*, and to say, O ye dry Bones,  
*bear the word of the Lord*, together with  
what follows, in the two next Verses.


*And as I prophesied* (continued he) *there*  
*was a noise, and behold a shaking; and the*  
*Bones came together, Bone to his Bone,*  
*And--- lo! the Sinews and the Flesh came*  
*upon them, and the Skin covered them*  
*above: And at last, the Breath also came*  
*into them, and they lived, and stood up*  
*upon their Feet, an exceeding great Army.*

Where we have, in the Prophetick way,  
an Assurance given to the *Jews*, that,  
though their Polity was now dissolv'd,  
and their Tribes dispers'd, yet the time  
was coming, when the Providence of  
God would, in a wonderful Manner,  
work out their Deliverance and Return;  
re-unite the several Parts of their shat-  
ter'd Frame, and make that People  
live together once again under their  
own Laws, and in their own Coun-  
try. 'Tis true, this Vision hath, by  
some

SERM. some of the Antients, been understood of

VII.  the *General Resurrection*; and by others, of the *General Restoration of the Jews* before the Second Coming of *Christ*; and perhaps Both these Great Transactions might be glanc'd at in it, and remotely intended by it: For the Predictions of Scripture are generally so contriv'd, as to extend to more than one Event; so, as to be fulfill'd at several Times, by several Steps and Degrees of Accomplishment. However, That, which the Prophet had chiefly and most nearly in his View, was, the Recovery of the *Jewish State* from the Captivity which it then groan'd under; and to That therefore the Vision is, at the Close of it, expressly applied: *Son of Man, these Bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts: therefore, prophecy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the Land of Israel, and ye shall know that I am the Lord.*

The

The words of the Text, therefore, when S E R M.  
taken together with the other parts of VII.  
the Prophecy, to which they belong, carry   
in them this Consideration, " That  
" God doth sometimes interpose in be-  
" half of lost States and Kingdoms, and  
" delights to manifest his Power and  
" Providence, in retrieving them from  
" Ruin, when they are as incapable of  
" Restitution by all Human means, as  
" dead and dry Bones are of recovering  
" their Vital Juice, and being compact-  
" ed again into a living Body." A Sub-  
ject, fit every way to employ our  
Thoughts, at a Time, in which we are  
call'd upon to commemorate a *Revolu-*  
*tion*, as surprizing in its Manner, as happy  
in its Consequences, as full every way of  
Wonder, and of all the Marks of a Di-  
vine Contrivance, as any Age, or Coun-  
try, (even this Country it self, which  
hath experienc'd so many and great Vi-  
cissitudes) can shew; and which, tho'  
plac'd in our Annals at some Distance  
from us, cannot yet be forgotten by us,  
as long as we feel the Influence, and reap  
the

S E R M. the Benefits of it; that is, as long as Regal

VII. Government, and the free Use of Parliaments, the Profession of God's pure Religion, and the Enjoyment of our Ancient Laws and Liberties shall continue among us: And, if it can be forgotten with the Loss of These only, there is no good *Englishman* but will say, May the Memory of it always flourish!

Give me leave, therefore, to lay before you some Thoughts concerning the Wisdom of Divine Providence, in interposing so particularly to bring about these mighty unexpected Turns of State; which it doth, doubtless, for many Wise Reasons known only to that Infinite Mind which Steers the Course of such great Actions: However, some there are, that lie open even to our narrow Apprehensions. And,

1. The Providence of God concerns it self in producing such surprizing Events, in order to have its Influence on Things below observ'd and acknowledg'd; which would go near to be forgotten, did he not,

not, by some remarkable Instances of his S E R M.  
Interposition in Human Affairs, raise Men V I L.  
up at fit times, into a lively and vigorous  
Sense of it. Though we know, that we  
Live, Move, and have our Being in God,  
that we are supported every Moment by  
his Power, and conducted in all our Ac-  
tions by his unerring Wisdom and Good-  
ness; yet the Impression which this  
Knowledge makes upon our Minds, is but  
faint, and is quickly effac'd. His Con-  
curring Influences in this Case are so se-  
cret, and so difficult to be distinguish'd  
from the working of Natural and Moral  
Causes, that we are too apt to rest in the  
Contemplation of these, without any re-  
course to those; and to resolve all that  
happens to us, in Our own Concerns, in-  
to the Power of such Principles as lie  
nearest to us. And, even in the greater  
and more Publick Transactions of the  
World, when they go on in such a man-  
ner, as to look like the Effects of Human  
Foresight and Contrivance, we are apt to  
stop short in our Reflections upon them,  
without carrying our Thoughts up to

S E R M. that invisible Hand, which wields the

VII. vast Machine, and directs all its Springs  
 and Motions, *Since the Fathers fell asleep,*

2 Pet. iii.  
 4. said the Scoffers in St. Peter, *all things  
 continue as they were*; and they were  
 ready to infer, therefore, that all things  
 went on of themselves, without a Superior  
 Power to Influence, or Controul them.  
 But, when the great Scene of Govern-  
 ment is shifted all at once, and the Causes,  
 that visibly contribute to the Production  
 of this Effect, bear no Proportion to it;  
 then we look out for others of a more ex-  
 tended Force; we perceive a Divine Pro-  
 vidence interesting itself in our Affairs,  
 and adore the Footsteps of it. When these  
 National Judgments, or Mercies of God  
 are *abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of  
 it will learn righteousness*. And that  
 Lesson of Divine Wisdom then learnt,  
 will be apply'd by them to other Circum-  
 stances, and on far different Occasions.  
 For, when once a true Principle of Piety,  
 and of a Religious Dependence on God, is  
 duly excited in us, it will operate beyond  
 the particular Cause from whence it  
 sprang,

sprang, and give a general Turn and Tendency to all Thoughts and Reflection; as One wise Rule of Behaviour, deeply imbib'd, will be useful to us in hundreds of Instances, and spread its Influence throughout the whole Course and Conduct of our Lives and Actions.


Since, therefore, we are so apt to forget God's Administration of the great Affairs below, when they go on evenly and regularly, he is pleas'd, I say, by Awakening Notices, now and then to put us in mind of it; to present to our View some astonishing Revolution of State, like a Glaring Comet, hung up in the Air, whose extraordinary Appearance, and Irregular Motion, shall sooner lead our Thoughts up to the Author of Nature, and imprint a deeper Awe of him upon our Minds, than the Sight of the whole Host of Heaven, in orderly Array continually moving round us.

Indeed, since the Age of Miracles ceas'd, as it did, when the Testimony of the Gospel was fully Seal'd, the chief way, in which God hath been pleas'd to



S E R M. give Extraordinary Indications of his  
 VII. Power and Providence, hath been by such  
 ~~~~~ *Signs of the Times*, such Wonders of  
 Government as these; which were not  
 calculated, like other Miracles, for any  
 particular Purpose, or Period; but have  
 been in the World as long as Kingdoms  
 and Nations have been, and are to last  
 together with them. And this suggests to  
 us also, a

2d Reason of God's interposing so  
 remarkably in the sudden Depressing or  
 Advancing of Kingdoms and States, be-  
 cause this conduces to the Manifestation  
 of his *Political* Justice, or of that Rule  
 of Acting which he observes, as the  
 Great Governor and Lord of the World,  
 towards Publick Bodies and Communi-  
 ties of Men; and which is very different  
 from that by which he Punishes the Sins,  
 or Rewards the Virtues of Private Per-  
 sons. The Justice of his dealing with  
 Particular Men may be manifested here,  
 or hereafter, as he thinks fit; for their  
 Duration is Eternal: And should their  
 Success-


Successful Crimes, or Unmerited Afflic- SERM.  
 tions be wink'd at in this World, it VII.  
 suffices, if such Irregularities are set   
 right in another. But, as to Societies,  
 and Combinations of Men, which are of  
 a shorter Date, another Rule must take  
 place; they will at length be lost and  
 swallow'd up in the Kingdom of the  
 Lamb, and be made one Fold under one  
 Shepherd, one People under one Lord,  
 and Head, *Christ Jesus*: And, therefore,  
 the Justice of God's Administration, in  
 regard to such Communities, must be  
 manifested either here, or not at all.  
 For which Reason, I say, and that the  
 Manifestation of it may be the more  
 Glorious and Worthy of him, he some-  
 times turns about the Affairs and For-  
 tunes of States in a very wonderful man-  
 ner, and makes himself to be known to  
 be the *most High, that ruleth in the* Dan. iv.  
*Kingdoms of Men.* 17.

And from this Notion of God's Go-  
 verning, or Political Justice, we may  
 give ourselves some Account why Tem-  
 poral Felicities and Calamities are so

S E R M. often spoken of, and make such a Figure

VII. in the Writings of *Moses*, and the Prophets: For, under that Dispensation, God's Messengers addressed themselves to the *Jews* generally, as to a Nation, or Civil Body of Men; and stirr'd them up to Virtue, therefore, or dehorted them from Vice, by such Motives as were properly applicable to States and Communities. Whereas, in the Gospel, we meet but few Passages, or Instructions of this kind; the Precepts of it being chiefly design'd to improve the Morals, and regulate the Behaviour of Private Persons, and to advance their Virtue to a Degree of Perfection, answerable in some Measure to the Gracious Discoveries then first imparted to them. But, as to the Conduct of Societies, or of particular Members in relation to them, little is said; because the Doctrine of the Law, and the Prophets, was so full in that Point, that there was no need of repeating Lessons, there so often inculcated, and no room for improving upon them.


For

For this Reason, among others, may SERM.  
we suppose, that the *Jews* were so re- VII.  
markably separated from other Nations,   
and kept so entire within themselves, by  
the exprefs Commands of God, and by  
a Fence of many Peculiar Rites and Cere-  
monies; and that the History of the  
various and strange Vicissitudes they un-  
derwent, from their first Erection into a  
People, down to their final Excision, is so  
punctually registred and transmitted to us;  
that we might in Them, as in the Glass of  
Providence, (if I may so speak) distinctly  
see all the several Ways and Methods of  
God's dealing with great States and King-  
doms, and be fully instructed in the Rules  
of his raising, or depressing, prospering,  
or punishing them, by the Interposition  
of a Divine Power, as Visible almost as  
the Virtues, or Vices, that occasioned it.  
But,

3<sup>dly</sup>, It may afford us a farther Ac-  
count of those Unexpected Turns of  
State and Deliverances, which the Arm  
of God brings to pass, if we consider of

256 *The Wisdom of Providence manifested.*

SERM. what Use they are, to baffle the mista-

VII. ken Policy of Men, and to discover the  
 Vanity and Emptiness of all those Pre-  
 tentences to a deep and consummate Wis-  
 dom, which the falsely-wise of this World  
 please themselves in, and value them-  
 selves upon.


Men of Ability and Experience in great  
 Affairs, who have been long at the Helm,  
 have hit oft in their Conjectures upon  
 things, and have been very Prosperous  
 in many of their Projects, are apt at last  
 to give themselves the Honour of all their  
 Good Luck, and to grow vain upon it;  
 saying proudly in their Heart, accord-  
 ing to the Elegant Expressions of *Isaiab*,  
*By the strength of my Hand I have*  
*done it, and by my Wisdom, for I am pru-*  
*dent; and I have removed the Bounds of*  
*the People, and have robbed their Trea-*  
*sure, and I have put down their Inhabi-*  
*tants like a valiant Man. And my Hand*  
*hath found, as a Nest, the Riches of the*  
*People; and as one gathereth Eggs that*  
*are left, have I gathered all the Earth;*  
*and there was none that moved the Wing,*

*Isaiah x.*  
*13. 14.*

or

*or opened the Mouth, or peeped.* Thus they SERM.  
adore the goodly Scheme, by which they VII.  
brought all these things to pass, and  
reckon upon it as sure and infallible, for  
the future ; when nevertheless, it hath this  
one Terrible Defect, that God is left out  
of it : And therefore, he gives them of-  
ten a convincing Proof of the Folly  
of it, by unravelling all their Measures at  
once, and blasting all their Undertakings,  
and bringing about a new Scene of  
Things, through unheeded, unsuspected  
Methods, which they could not foresee  
with all their Skill, nor prevent by all  
their Prudence ; that so *the Wise Man may* Jer. ix.  
*learn, not to glory in his Wisdom, and the* 23, 24.  
*mighty Man not to glory in his Might :*  
*but he that glorieth may glory in this, that*  
*he understandeth, and knoweth Me ; that I*  
*am the Lord, which exercise loving Kind-*  
*ness, Judgment, and Righteousness in the*  
*Earth ; for in these things I delight, saith*  
*the Lord.* Were it not for such surprizing  
Revolutions of Affairs, which disappoint  
the Devices of these Crafty ones, and  
makes the Heads of the Ablest and most  
Experi-

S E R M. Experienc'd Lookers on, giddy at the

VII. Sight, God would, in the Opinion of many  
 of his Creatures, be shut out from the Government of the World, and the Honour of his Conduct would be devolv'd upon some of the Mean and Subordinate Instruments of it; those poor Insects that sit upon the Wheels of State, and imagine themselves to be the Authors of all its Motions, and able to check, or to quicken them, at their Pleasure.

There is yet a (4<sup>th</sup>) good Use, to which these great National Changes are subservient, (those of them, especially, which carry a People at once from the Extremity of Bad, to the Height of Good Fortune; such as That we are now Met to Commemorate) and it is this; That the Belief of them tends to create and encourage a *National Piety*, and a Publick Avow'd Dependence upon God, in the greatest Extremities. For, when once Men are firmly perswaded, either from the Experience of what They themselves have felt, or from the Assurance of what hath  
 happen'd

happen'd to Others, that no People can be reduc'd to such a wretched and forlorn Condition, but that the good Providence of God may, and will, if it sees fit, come in to their Rescue, and deliver them; even without Hope, and against Hope: I say, when this Opinion is once fix'd in Mens Minds, it introduces presently a Publick Face of Religion amongst them, and common Endeavours of expressing their common Trust and Dependence upon God; and it ties them together by the strictest Bands of Fraternal Love, Amity, and Union. Of this the *Jews* are a very Signal and Instructive Instance, under their several Captivities, and Dispersions; where, tho' they were lost to all human Hopes of Recovery, yet, having an Assurance of the known Favour and Protection of God towards their State, they persisted, in the Strength of it, to wait for, and to expect their Deliverance; and had at those times, such a true Sincere Spirit of Piety stirring amongst them, such Zeal towards God, such Unanimity amongst themselves, as they were utterly Strangers

to

SERM.

VII.





S E R M. to, upon Other Occasions: Infomuch that

VII. They, who, when at home, under the free  
 ~~~~~ Enjoyment of their Temple-Worship, were  
 prone to all manner of Idolatry; when  
 scattered into the Lands of Idols, where  
 they had the Temptation ever near them,  
 and before their Eyes, are observ'd never  
 once to have comply'd with it. And this  
 very Principle it is, that still supports and  
 animates them, under this their Last and  
 Greatest Dispersion, keeps them still ri-  
 gidly addicted to their Rites, and closely  
 combin'd among themselves, without mix-  
 ing with any of the Nations among whom  
 they dwell; under the Hopes, that God  
 will, yet once more, as he hath often al-  
 ready done, make bare his Holy Arm in  
 their Behalf, and restore the lost State of  
*Israel*. Nay, even We our selves, who  
 are now met to Worship God, were very  
 lately an Instance of the Efficacy of such  
 Persuasions as these, towards raising up a  
 dissolute People into all the Heights of  
 an Universal and Undissembled Piety.  
 For when, in the Late Hour of Distress  
 and Danger, our Constitution in Church  
 and

and State was just Sinking under us, and S E R M.  
the two greatest Evils that belong to VII.  
Human Nature, the Oppression of our Li-  
berties, and of our Consciences, were  
ready to overtake us, and no Human  
Help, that we could then see, was near;  
how yet did our Belief of the Over-ru-  
ling Power of God sustain us with the  
Hopes that he would, in some Way, or  
other, own our Cause, support our sink-  
ing State, and work our Salvation for us?  
And how were we wrought upon by this  
Confidence, to turn to him with the ut-  
most Unanimity and Earnestness? What  
Zeal did we then express for the Pure  
Religion of *Christ*? What Reverence to-  
wards his Priests? What Love towards  
one another? What good Resolutions did  
we take up? What Solemn Vows did we  
make of living answerably to Our Holy  
Profession? and, I believe, sincerely meant  
(tho' by our Behaviour since, one would  
scarce think, we meant) to perform them?  
How were our Churches then fill'd with  
Crowds of Worshipers? Our Altars sur-  
rounded by unusual Numbers of Devout  
Com-

S E R M. Communicants? How were all Ranks

VII.

and Conditions of Men Then remarkable for their Piety and Seriousness; as remarkable as they are now for their Indifference and Prophaneness? Doubtless, the Addresses, we then made to God for Relief, were actuated and enliven'd by a Reflection on the Surprizing Blessings of this Day; and we were encouraged to hope that God, who had once before wonderfully restor'd our Constitution, even when it was lost, would be prevail'd with also, by a timely Application, to preserve it from Ruin. And methinks, therefore, our Latter Deliverance should not make the Former forgot; when the One of these was the Foundation of our asking, and obtaining the Other. How know we, what Need we may Yet have of retreating to such Considerations, and fortifying ourselves with a Reflection on such Encouraging Precedents as these? And we do well, therefore, to cherish the Memory of them.

That we may do so, give me leave, in compliance with the Design of this Day  
and

and this Assembly, briefly to set before S E R M.  
you, First, The Greatness and Extent of VII.  
that Publick Blessing for which we think  
ourselves oblig'd so long afterwards to pay  
our Publick Thanks; and then (what my  
Text more particularly directs me to) the  
Extraordinary and Surprising manner in  
which it was convey'd to us.

The Blessing was of itself Vast and  
Comprehensive; for it took in all that  
was valuable and dear to us, either on a  
Religious, or Civil Account; and reset-  
tled a ruined Church and Kingdom on  
that Firm Basis, on which they stood, till  
violent and wicked Hands remov'd them;  
and on which may they stand for Ever!  
'Tis natural for Men to think that Go-  
vernment the best, under which they drew  
their first Breath, and to propose it as a  
Model and Standard for all Others. But,  
if any People upon Earth have a just Ti-  
tle thus to boast, 'tis We of this Island;  
who enjoy a Constitution, wisely mould-  
ed, out of all the different Forms and  
Kinds of Civil Government, into such an  
Excellent and Happy Frame, as contains  
in

264 *The Wisdom of Providence manifested.*

SERM. in it all the Advantages of those several  
 VII. Forms, without sharing deeply in any of  
 ~~~~~ their Great Inconveniencies. A Constitution, nicely poiz'd between the Extremes of too much Liberty, and too much Power; the several Parts of it having a proper Check upon each other: By the means of which they are all restrain'd, or soon reduced, within their due Bounds: And yet the peculiar Powers, with which Each is separately invested, are sure always, in Dangerous Conjunctions, to give way to the Common Good of the Whole. A Constitution, where the Prince is cloath'd with a Prerogative, that enables him to do all the Good he hath a mind to; and wants no Degree of Authority, but what a Good Prince would not, and an Ill one ought not to have: Where he governs, tho' not Absolutely, yet Gloriously, because he governs Men, and not Slaves; and is obey'd by them chearfully, because they know that, in obeying Him, they obey those Laws only which they themselves had a Share in contriving. A Constitution,  
 where

where the External Government of the Church is so closely interwoven with that of the State, and so exactly adapted to it, in all its Parts, as that it can flourish only, when That flourishes; and must, as it hath always hitherto done, decline, die, and revive with it. In a word, where the Interest of Prince and Subject, Priest and People, are perpetually the same; and the only fatal Mistake, that ever happens in our Politicks, is, when they are thought to be divided.


It is objected indeed to this Admirable Model, that it is liable to frequent Struggles and Concussions within, from the several Interfering Parts of it: But this, which is reckon'd the Disease of our Constitution, may rather be thought a Mark of its Soundness, and the chief Security of its Continuance. For 'tis with Governments exactly contriv'd, as with Bodies of a nice Frame and Texture, where, the Humours being evenly mix'd, every little Change of the Proportion introduces a Disorder, and raises that Ferment which is necessary to bring all right

SERM. again; and which thus preserves the

VII. Health of the Whole, by giving early Notice of whatever is noxious to any of the Parts: Whereas in Governments, as well as Bodies of a coarser Make, the Disease doth often not begin to shew itself, till it hath infected the whole Mass, and is past a Cure; and so, tho' they are disorder'd later, yet they are destroy'd much sooner. Accordingly we know that, under this Disadvantage, if it be one, our Constitution hath now lasted pretty Entire through many Ages: For, excepting the short Interruptions which *Conquest* gave, (which, however, have not been either so Many, or so Great, as some would make them) it hath continu'd much the same, in the main Parts and Branches of it, from the Earliest Times of our *Saxon* Ancestors, down to these Days. A clear Proof, that it is a Government suited every way to our Temper, and to our Clime; that it is perfectly made for Us, and We for It: And that God, therefore, never punishes us more sorely, than when he deprives us of it for a time; nor ever con-

fers


tiers a great Blessing upon us, than when S E R M.  
he restores it---- VII.

As he did on this happy Day; when,   
after the Confusions of a Long Civil War,  
attended with the Destruction of an Excel-  
lent Church, the Murther of a Gracious  
Prince, and the Grievous Tyranny of  
our Fellow Subjects, he was pleas'd  
at length to give us back again, what  
we had so lightly departed from, our  
Old *English* Government and Laws; and,  
together with them, what we before  
boasted of in Name only, the True Liber-  
ty of the Subject, and the real Freedom  
and Honour of Parliaments. And to  
this Day, therefore, we owe all the Be-  
nefits we have since reap'd from the Re-  
gal Administration, all the Peace, Plenty,  
and Happiness, we have enjoy'd, or  
our Posterity after us shall enjoy, under  
it.

To the Influence of this Day it is owing,  
that we have now at the Head of our  
Troops, and our Councils, a Prince, who  
hath happily join'd together the Extremes  
of Martial and Political Virtues; and




SERM. knows as well how to Govern a Free

VII.  People by their own Laws and Customs, as to Command Legions: Who, whether in the Cabinet, or in the Field, is still equally in his Sphere; and is always indifferent, therefore, either to War, or Peace, any farther than the One, or the Other, shall conduce to the Good of his People, and the General Interest of Mankind.

Nay, to this Day it is owing, That that Great Assembly before which I stand, are, under the Auspicious Conduct of our Prince, Arbiters of the Fate, and Governors of the Balance of *Europe*: That their Resolves have as wide an Influence, as the Firmest Leagues and Confederacies; and their very Counsels are more Formidable than the Hostile Preparations of Others: So that They, who lately felt the Weight of the *English* Arms, will be afraid of entering upon such Measures as may awaken Your Resolution of once again taking them up; saying within themselves, according to the Expressions

Gen. xlix. of the Enlighten'd Patriarch; *Judah is*  
9. *a Lion's Whelp, he hath gone up from the*  
*the*


*the Prey, He Stooped down, he Couched* S E R M.  
*as a Lion, and as an Old Lion; Who* VII.  
*shall rouse him up?* 

The Blessing, therefore, we Commemorate, was Great; and it was made yet greater by the Way in which God was pleas'd to convey it to us: For he did it in such a Manner, as to shew, that He was the Sole Author of it, and that it sprang not from Human Wit, or Contrivance. He did it, after our Forefathers were reduced to Extremities, and had tired themselves by Various Attempts to bring this great End about, and had been baffled in all of them, and sat down at last in despair of effecting it. Then was it time for him to appear for our Redemption, and to give Himself the Glory of it. All was Darkness about them, without Form, and void; when the Spirit of God mov'd upon the Face of this Abyss, and said, *Let there be Light, and there was Light*: And both God and Man *saw that this Light was Good*; the One, rejoicing in his Own Gift; and the Other, blessing and magnifying the Bestower of it. 'Tis

S E R M. true, the Reasoners of this World, who

VII. love to solve every Event, without any  
 ~~~~~ Recourse to a Divine Power, will be ready to point out several Causes, which help'd forward this End, and smooth'd the way towards it. But though there were many such, yet it must be own'd, that All of them put together were not of Force enough to produce the Effect; nor, particularly, to account for that Universal Bent and Inclination of the People of all Ranks, Interests and Opinions, which, upon the first Opening of this wonderful Scene, at once discover'd itself; and which could proceed from Him alone, who hath the Hearts of all Men in his Hand, and turneth them whithersoever he listeth.

Alas! When Man is to influence Man, in order to bring about such Mighty Changes as these, the Work goes on but slowly. 'Tis hard to Unite in any Common Measures all the several little Sects and Parties, into which a Nation is crumbled; their Interfering Interests, Passions, and Prejudices will obstruct the  
 best-

best-laid Design: What it gains in one S E R M.  
Place, it will lose in another; and never, VII.  
but by the Intervention of a Superior   
Power, succeed Universally. But when  
God once comes into such a Work, it  
ripens apace; all Obstructions presently  
cease, all Difficulties vanish. As the  
Tops of Corn bend this way, or that, be-  
fore the Wind; so are the various Minds  
of the Multitude sway'd and inclin'd by  
the Inward Breathings of his Spirit.

It is worth observing, therefore in the  
Vision of *Ezekiel*, from whence my Text  
is drawn, how, even after *the Sinews*  
*and the Flesh were come up upon the Dry*  
*Bones, and the Skin had covered them*  
*above*, yet still it is said, that *there was*  
*no Breath in them*; and still therefore  
the Prophet is commanded to *prophecy*  
*to the four Winds*, and to bid them  
*breathe upon those slain, that they might*  
*live*: And then, and not till then it was,  
that *the Breath came into them, and*  
*they lived, and stood upon their Feet, an*  
*exceeding great Army*. The Meaning of  
which is, that in every sudden Revo-

S E R M. lutions of State, though there be many  
 VII. visible Dispositions and Causes, that con-  
 ~~~~~ cur to favour it, yet still the last Finishing  
 Turn is always from God; who animates  
 and invigorates the whole Design, puts all  
 its Parts at once into Motion, and removes  
 all Impediments.

Thus he effected the Deliverance of  
 this Day; by opening at once the Eyes  
 of a Deluded People, shewing them  
 their True Interest, and inspiring them  
 with Unanimity and Zeal to pursue it;  
 and in order to it, allaying their Mu-  
 tual Heats, lessening their Prejudices,  
 and softning their Aversions. *The Wolf*  
*he made to dwell with the Lamb, and*  
*the Leopard to lie down with the Kid;*  
 that is, the most Opposite Tempers were  
 brought to conspire peaceably in this  
 Great Event, the most Divided Interests  
 were reconciled in it: And even They,  
 who were prepar'd to Prophecy against  
 it, were yet, by an Over-ruling Influ-  
 ence, determin'd to pronounce a Bless-  
 ing; and forc'd, as they look'd on, to  
 take up their Parable, and say, *God*  
*batb*

*bath not beheld Iniquity in Jacob, nei- 3 ERM.  
ther bath be ſeen Perverſeneſs in Iſrael; VII.  
the Lord his God is with him, and Numb.  
the ſhout of a King is among them. xxxiii. 21.  
God bath brought them out of Egypt; 22, 23.  
be bath, as it were, the ſtrength of an  
Unicorn. Surely, there is no Inchant-  
ment againſt Jacob, neither is there  
any Divination againſt Iſrael: Accord-  
ing to this time it ſhall be ſaid of Ja-  
cob, and of Iſrael, What bath God  
wrought?*

Since the Work, therefore, was His,  
let us give Him the Praise of it! Even as  
we do, by this Solemn Appearance: fal-  
ling low on our Knees before his Footſtool,  
and ſaying, *Not unto Us, O Lord, not* Pl. cxv. 1.  
*unto Us, nor unto our Forefathers, but unto  
Thy Name give Glory; for thy Mercy  
and for thy Truth's Sake! For thy Mer-  
cy's Sake, which induc'd thee to give ſo  
happy a Turn to the Affairs of ſo Un-  
deſerving a People; and for thy Truth's  
Sake, which thou intendeſt to ſecure and  
to re-eſtabliſh by the Means of it.*

SERM. Let us piously ascribe this, and all

VII. other our Deliverances to God, and all  
 our Calamities to our Selves; acknowledging the One to be as properly the Consequence of our Sins, as the Other is the Result of his Unmerited Favour and Goodness. And let us from such surprising Events as these, which have confessedly something Divine in them, learn to lift up our Thoughts above Material Causes, and to instruct ourselves in all the Amazing Lessons of God's Governing Providence; by which he holds the Balance of Nations, and inclines it which way he pleases; so that *all the Inhabitants of the Earth are reputed as nothing to him, and he doth according to his Will in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth, and none can stay his Hand, or say unto him, What dost thou?*

Dan. iv.  
35.

And this he now performs by the Administration of the Man *Christ Jesus*; to whom, immediately upon his Resurrection, he gave all Power, in Heaven, and in Earth; and whom, upon his

*Ascend* into Heaven, (the Holy Subjects S E R M.  
also of this Day's Solemnity) he instated in V I I.  
the full Possession and Exercise of that  
Power; declaring him King of Kings, and  
Lord of Lords. And, indeed, *Worthy is* Rev. v.  
*the Lamb that was slain, to receive Power,* 12, 13.  
*and Riches, and Wisdom, and Strength,*  
*and Honour, and Glory, and Blessing.*  
Therefore, *Blessing and Honour, and*  
*Glory and Power, be unto him that sitteth*  
*upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb, for*  
*ever and ever!*

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*The Duty of Publick Intercession and  
Thanksgiving for Princes.*

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A  
S E R M O N  
Preach'd before the Honourable  
HOUSE of COMMONS

A T  
St. Margaret's, Westminster,  
On Wednesday, March 8, 170 $\frac{1}{4}$ .  
Being the Day of her MAJESTY's Happy  
Accession to the THRONE.

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I TIM. ii. 1, 2, 3.  
*I Exhort, That, first of all, Supplications,  
Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of  
Thanks be made for all Men; for Kings,  
and all that are in Authority; that we  
may lead a Quiet and Peaceable Life,  
in all Godliness and Honesty: For this is  
Good and Acceptable in the Sight of God,  
our Saviour.*

THERE was nothing by which the S E R M.  
Enemies of Christianity endea- V III.  
vour'd, and hop'd so much to retard the ~~~~~  
Pro-

S E R M. Progress of it, as by representing to

VIII. Princes and Rulers, that the Propagation  
 of this Doctrine tended to subvert their  
 Government; that the Spreaders of it,  
 where-ever they came, *exceedingly trou-  
 bled Cities, and turned the World upside  
 down.* It behov'd the Apostles, therefore,  
 to guard against this Objection with all  
 imaginable Care. As they knew, that  
 the great Work, in which they were em-  
 ploy'd, was not, as yet, to be promoted,  
 or countenanc'd by the Powers of this  
 World; so they resolv'd to give them no  
 just Ground, or Colour to obstruct it: and  
 wisely, therefore, took all Occasions to  
 declare their Abhorrence of such as *de-  
 spised Dominion, and spake Evil of Dig-  
 nities*; frequently press'd upon their new  
 Converts the Duties of paying *Honour,*  
 and *Fear*; and *Tribute* to the *Higher  
 Powers*; [as being *the Ordinance of God*]  
 and of *submitting themselves* to them,  
*not only for Wrath, but also for Con-  
 science sake.* And, for this Reason, it  
 may be presum'd that St. *Paul* introduceth  
 his Instructions to *Timothy*, the new Bi-  
 shop

Jude 8

shop of *Ephesus*, by *Exhorting him*, that, SERM.  
VIII.  
in order to a due Discharge of his high Trust, he should *first of all*, or, above all things, take care, that *Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks be made for all Men; especially for Kings, and all that are in Authority; that we may lead a Quiet and Peaceable Life, in all Godliness, and Honesty: For this, says he, is Good, and Acceptable in the Sight of God, our Saviour.*

The Exhortation hath a double Aspect, on Mankind in general, and on Princes and Rulers in particular. I shall consider it, with regard to the Latter of these only, for whose Sake the Apostle seems chiefly to have made it; and under this View, it suggests to us Three Heads of Discourse, very proper to be handled on this Day, and in this Assembly.

I. It recommends a great Duty to us, the  
Duty of *making Supplications, Prayers, and Intercessions, and of giving Thanks, for Kings, and all that are in Authority.*

II. It

## S E R M.

## VIII.




## II.

II. It expresses the general Reason, and Ground of that Duty: *For this is Good and Acceptable in the Sight of God, our Saviour.*

III. III. It quickens us to the Exercise of it by a special Motive, drawn from the Consideration of our own Ease, Advantage, and Happiness; *That we may lead a Quiet and Peaceable Life, in all Godliness and Honesty.*

These Points I shall first consider, and explain, in that Latitude, with which the Apostle hath propos'd them; and then adapt the general Argument to the particular Occasion of this Day's joyful Solemnity.

I. The Writers on this Place have distinguish'd with some Exactness between *Supplications*, *Prayers*, and *Intercessions*, and endeavour'd to give us the strict and proper Sense of each of these Words; which, I think, it is neither necessary, nor easy  
to

to determine. Sure we are, that by All S E R M.  
 these together the Apostle intended to ex- VIII.  
 press the Petitionary Part of our Devo-   
 tions; and by *giving of Thanks*, the other  
 Part, which consists of Hymns and Praises.  
 These two comprise the whole of our Re-  
 ligious Service; and in both these ways  
 we are exhorted to address ourselves to  
 God, *for Kings, and all that are in*  
*Authority*, i. e. for the Supreme Ma-  
 gistrate, and all Inferior and Subordinate  
 Governors.

Ancient and Modern Interpreters agree  
 to understand this Passage of the Pub-  
 lick Offices, or Devotions of the Church:  
 and, indeed, the Episcopal Character of  
*Timothy*, to whom the Exhortation is  
 address'd; the Instructions which imme-  
 diately follow, and manifestly relate to the  
 same Head of Publick Worship; and the  
 profess'd Design of St. Paul in writing  
 this Epistle, which was, to instruct *Ti-*  
*mothy, How he ought to behave himself*, Tim. iii.  
*in the House of God*; do, I think, natu- 15.  
 rally and necessarily determine us so to  
 understand it: Especially, if we consider,  
 Vol. I. T that,

S E R M. that the Exhortation, thus understood,  
 VIII. was agreeable to the Practice of the  
 ~~~~~ *Jewish* Church; the Pattern, which, in  
 Matters of Worship, Discipline, and Go-  
 vernment, the Apostles chiefly follow'd:  
 And, accordingly, we find the Earliest  
 Apologist for Christianity representing it  
 as the Constant and known Usage of the  
 First Christians, in all their Sacred Assem-  
 blies, to Pray for the Lives of their Em-  
 perors, and for the Prosperity of their State  
 and Government.

Our Church is in this, as in other Re-  
 spects, truly Primitive; for thus we pray  
 daily in her Liturgy. And what we do  
 every Day, we may, at some times, be  
 allow'd to perform more devoutly and  
 solemnly; even as often as the Course of  
 the Year shall bring on that Happy Day,  
 when her Majesty first began to Reign  
 on the Throne of her Ancestors, and in  
 the Hearts of her Subjects, and to refresh  
 this Church, and State, with the kind In-  
 fluences of her Mild and Gracious Admi-  
 nistration. Whenever this Annual Season  
 of Joy returns, a lively and affecting Sense  
 of

of the Mercies it convey'd to us, cannot SERM.  
but return with it: which we have no VIII.  
better way of expreffing, than by Offer-  
ing up to God, (as now we do, and  
are by *St. Paul* exhorted to do) our De-  
voutest Thanks for the Bleffings we al-  
ready feel, and our moft earneft Prayers for  
the Continuance and Increase of them.

The Reason and Ground of which Duty  
is thus, in the

Second Place, expreffed: *For this is* II.  
*Good and Acceptable in the Sight of God,*  
*our Saviour.* It is *Good*, i. e. highly  
Decent, Expedient, and Reasonable in  
itself; and, therefore, *Acceptable in the*  
*Sight of God our Saviour*; a Performance  
particularly well pleasing to Him, by  
whom Kings Reign, of whose Power  
they partake, and whose *Image and Su-*  
*percription* they bear. Let us take a di-  
ftinct View of the feveral Springs, from  
whence our Obligation to this Duty may  
be fuppos'd to arife. And,



SERM. 1<sup>st</sup>, Our Applications to God in be-  
 VIII. half of the Princes and Rulers of this  
 ~~~~~ World are highly reasonable, as they are  
 Proper Expressions of our Good-Will to  
 Mankind, whose Fate is in their Hands,  
 and whose Welfare in great measure de-  
 pends upon their Actions and Conduct.  
 Sovereign Princes and States, are the  
 Chief Instruments, which the Providence  
 of God employs, in his Administrations  
 here below, and by which he brings  
 about all those Mighty Events, that fix,  
 or unsettle the Peace of the World.  
 When these great Wheels move irregu-  
 larly, the whole Machine of State is pre-  
 sently render'd unserviceable, and number-  
 less depending Motions are either stopp'd,  
 or disorder'd.

The Execution of all Laws is entrusted  
 with Them; and Laws are the Source  
 of every Advantage that redounds to  
 Mankind from Society, which, without  
 them, would not be preferable to Soli-  
 tude. To the Influence of These it is  
 owing, that we can call any Thing our  
 Own, even Life itself; and are shelter'd

from the Attacks, which the Lusts and S E R M.  
Passions of Men, not restrain'd by the VIII.  
Principles of Reason and Religion, would  
be every Day making upon us; That we  
are polish'd in our Manners, and bred up  
in all the Arts of Civil Life, which can  
render us Useful, or Agreeable to each  
other: and, chiefly, that we have Op-  
portunities of thus appearing before God,  
and praising him in the Great Congrega-  
tion; of hearing his Everlasting Gospel  
expounded to us, and being directed in all  
those Paths of Piety and Virtue, which  
lead to Peace in this World, and to Ever-  
lasting Life in the next.

“ Of Law (said the excellent *Mr.*  
*Hooker* long since, with a Compass of  
Thought, and a Force of Words peculiar  
to him; Of Law) “ no less can be ac-  
“ knowledg’d, than that her Seat is in  
“ the Bosom of God; her Voice, the  
“ Harmony of the World; that all things  
“ in Heaven, and Earth, do her Homage;  
“ the very Least, as feeling her Care,  
“ and the Greatest, as not exempt from  
“ her Power; both Angels, and Men,

S E R M. " and Creatures, of what kind soever,

VIII. " though Each, in different Sort and

~ " Manner, yet All, with one Uniform

" Consent, admiring her as the Mother

" of their Peace and Joy." He, there-

fore, upon whose Authority, and Will,

the Obiervation of Human Laws depends,

hath the Happiness, or Misery of Man-

Psal. lxxv. kind in his Power; *the Earth, and all the*

3. *Inhabitants thereof, would be dissolved,*

did not such Persons *bear up the Pillars*

*of it.*

Nay, even the Example of Princes, is,

itself, a Living Law to their Subjects,

which fashions them by Degrees into a

Likeness of Manners, and spreads its In-

fluence insensibly, but powerfully, thro'

Cities, and Kingdoms.

So that, to make Supplications for

Kings, that their Government may be

Wise, Just, and Prosperous, is, to pray

at once for all the Temporal Felicities


which can accrue to us; a good Reign

being the most Universal and Compre-

hensive Blessing, which either Man can

ask, or God bestow; and for which we


have

have as much Reason to be Thankful as S E R M.  
for the Light of the Sun, for Temperate VIII.  
Weather, and Fruitful Seasons. 

Even an Ill Prince cannot help doing a great deal of Good, by preserving some Degree of Order and Government in the World; and, therefore, even Such an One hath a Title to our Prayers, and Thanksgivings. But, when Virtue ascends the Throne, it dispenses Blessings without Number, and without Measure; and spreads it Influence on all around, and beneath it: *Its going forth* PSAL. LXX.  
*is from the End of a Kingdom, and* <sup>6.</sup>  
*its Circuit to the Ends of it, and there is nothing hid from the Heat thereof.* *Happy are the People that are in such a Case;* They have great Reason to Bless, who are thus Blessed of the Lord. But,

2dly, As the Virtues and Vices of those who Govern, operate on all Inferior Ranks of Men, in the way of Natural Causes, so have they another, and a more Extraordinary Effect; inasmuch as God doth often take Occasion to Reward

SERM. or Punish a People, not only by the  
 VIII. Means of Good, or Ill Princes, but even  
 ~~~~~ for the Sake of them. Plain Instances of  
 this kind we have recorded in Scripture;  
 particularly, where Subjects have suffer'd  
 for the Iniquities of those who were set  
 over them, and the Vengeance, Merited  
 by the One, hath been Inflicted, and, as  
 it were, Transferred on the Other.  
 Whether it be, that the good, or ill Con-  
 duct of Rulers is sometimes Owing to  
 their People, and may therefore justly be  
 Imputed to them; or whether (as in the  
 Case of Visiting the Sins of Parents on  
 their Children) by making them mu-  
 tually liable to the Consequences of  
 each Other's Actions, God intends to  
 imprint a mutual Concern and Endeav-  
 our for each Other's Welfare, and to  
 Unite them together in the strictest Bands  
 of Interest, and Affection: Whatever  
 the Reason of God's dealing in this  
 manner with Princes and States may be,  
 sure we are, that he doth thus deal with  
 them, and that this is one Chief Article  
 in that Scheme of Political Justice, by  
 which

which he governs the World. And SERM.  
can there be a better Argument for our VIII.  
Interceding with God in the behalf of   
*Kings, and all that are in Authority,*  
than This, That we are really at such  
times interceding for ourselves? Since  
We may be chastised for Their Transgres-  
sions, and reap the Rewards of Their Piety  
and Goodness? Further,

3dly, The Cares of Empire are great,  
and the Burthen, which lies upon the  
Shoulders of Princes, very weighty; and,  
on This Account, therefore, they Chal-  
lenge, because they particularly want, our  
Prayers, that they may *have an Under-*  
*standing Heart, to discern between Good*  
*and Bad, and to go out and in before a*  
*great People.* With what Difficulties is  
their Administration often clog'd by the  
Perverseness, Folly, or Wickedness of  
those they govern? How hard a thing do  
they find it, to inform themselves truly  
of the State of Affairs; where Fraud and  
Flattery surround, and take such Pains to  
mislead them? How Nice a Task is it, to  
distinguish between the Extremes of al-  
lowing

SERM. lowing too much Liberty, and affecting  
 VIII. too much Power? To what Daily Dan-  
 gers are their Persons expos'd, from the  
 Attempts of Treachery, and Violence? How particular and pressing are the Temptations, to which the Height of Power, they have attain'd makes them liable? They are above the Reach of Fear, Reproof, and most of those Outward Checks, which God has plac'd, as Guards upon private Mens Virtue; and are, on that Account, in great Danger of letting loose their Appetites and Passions in all manner of Excesses, without an Extraordinary Degree of God's Restraining Grace; which, therefore, it becomes, and concerns us to beg of Him, and for Them.

Christian Charity and Beneficence is a Debt which we owe to our Kings, as well as to the Meanest of their Subjects. But how shall we extend our Good Offices to Those, who move in so high a Sphere? how, but by applying ourselves to One, that is yet higher than They, even our Common Lord and Master; and humbly  
 implore

implore the Aids of his good Spirit, to SERM.  
Comfort, Support, and Guide them? VIII.  
This is the only Compensation, or Re-  
turn, which most of us are capable of  
making to them, for their Vigilance and  
Concern for the Publick Safety, the Pains  
which they take, and the Hazards which  
they run to secure it.

And, to encourage our Requests in their  
behalf, we may consider, in the

4<sup>th</sup>, Place, That the Providence of God  
doth, in a very Particular Manner, inter-  
pose towards swaying the Wills and Affec-  
tions, directing, or over-ruling the In-  
tentions of those who sit at the Helm:  
for *the King's Heart is in the Hand of* Prov. xxi.  
*God, as the Rivers of Waters; He turn-*  
*eth it whithersoever he listeth:* He gives  
a Bent to it, this way, or that; which it  
takes as certainly, and easily as a Stream  
is deriv'd into the Channels, which the  
Hand of the Workman prepares for it.  
On this Foundation our Church professes  
to build the Duty, and the Expedience of  
praying for Princes: *We are taught* (says  
She) *by the Holy Word, that the Hearts*




SERM. of *Kings are in thy Rule and Gover-*

VIII *nance, and that thou dost dispose and turn*

~ *them, as it seemeth best to thy godly*  
*Wysdom.* Indeed, the Spirit of God operates on the Spirits of all Men ; but not in so Copious, so Powerful, and Extraordinary a manner, as it doth on the *Spirits of Princes*, which God delighteth to *restrain*, and, by that means, to shew himself *Wonderful among the Kings of the Earth*. It is the chief Care, the peculiar Province, the great Prerogative of the King of Kings, to rule the Thoughts of Those, who rule the Actions of Others ; and thereby to bring about the Ends, the mysterious and inscrutable Ends, of his Providence. And, 'tis well for Mankind that there is a Being, who hath, and exerciseth such a Power ; for unless there were, Human Power, left to itself, would make wild work in the World ; the Chariot of Government would be often, and dangerously misguided by Rash Unskilful Drivers, did not an Invisible Hand hold the Reins, and gently direct the Course of it.

The

The Scripture seems to intimate, that S E R M.  
 God hath appointed Tutelar Angels, to VIII.  
 act under him, for this Purpose; at least,   
 that such Ministring Spirits there were,  
 before the Erection of the Mediatorial  
 Kingdom of our Saviour: For, in *Daniel*,  
 we read of Particular Princes, or Patrons,  
 assign'd, from the Angelic Host, to the  
*Grecians*, and *Persians*; in order, as is  
 piously believ'd to Encourage, Enlighten  
 and Protect the Governors of those Estates  
 and Empires. We are interested more  
 nearly in the Welfare and good Conduct  
 of Princes than those Ministring Spirits  
 are; shall we not have some share in pro-  
 curing it? Ought we not with our utmost  
 Zeal to assist Those, whom God, for our  
 sakes, vouchsafes in so Eminent a Manner  
 to direct, and assist? And, what better  
 way of assisting them have we, than by  
 our *Supplications and Thanksgivings*?  
 Which, let me add, in the

Last Place, are never, on this Occa-  
 sion, so becomingly and forcibly address'd  
 to God, as in the great Congregation.  
 Blessings of a publick Nature and Influ-


cence

SERMON. once require as Publick and Solemn Acknowledgments; and the proper Way of obtaining Mercies, which affect Many, is, by pouring out the Joint-Requests of Many in behalf of them: For in the Spiritual, as well as the Carnal Warfare, Numbers are most likely to prevail. The Ancients, therefore represent the Strength of such United Devotions by that of an Army, encompassing, besieging God; not to be defeated, or resisted by him. *Tertullian.* *Coimus ad Deum* (saith one of them) *ut, quasi Manu factâ, Precationibus eum ambiamus; hæc Vis Deo grata est:* " We come together in Troops, as it were, and surround God with our Prayers; this Violence of ours is well-pleasing to him." We then Ask, and we Then give Thanks, with the greatest Alacrity and Earnestness, and, consequently, with the surest Hope of Acceptance, and Success, when we excite and warm each other into this Holy Performance; and, with One Heart, and One Mouth, utter the Awakening Words which the Devout Psalmist us'd, at a Solemnity like This, which


which we are now met to celebrate: *This* S E R M.  
*is the Day which the Lord hath made; let* VIII.  
*us be glad, and rejoice in it. Help now,*  
*O Lord; O Lord, send us now Prosperi-*  
*ty. God is the Lord, who hath shewed*  
*us Light: Bind the Sacrifice with Cords,*  
*yea, even to the Horns of the Altar.*

I have explain'd the Grounds and Rea- III.  
sons of the Duty, intimated to us in those  
Words of the Text: *For this is Good, and*  
*Acceptable in the Sight of God our Sa-*  
*viour.* I proceed to consider the special  
Motive there propos'd, to quicken us into  
the Exercise of it: *That so we may lead a*  
*Quiet and Peaceable Life, in all Godli-*  
*ness and Honesty.* I shall briefly shew,  
in what Respects the Devotions recom-  
mended by the Apostle contribute to this  
End; and how far, therefore, our Own  
Ease, Advantage, and Happiness is con-  
cerned in paying them. And

1<sup>st</sup>, They have a plain Tendency this  
way, as they are a prevailing Argument  
with God so to dispose and incline the  
Minds of Princes, that they may study

S E R M. to promote the Quiet, Good and Prosperity of their Kingdoms. If we believe  
 VIII.  our Prayers to have any Effect, we cannot doubt their Usefulness in this Particular ; which is too evident to need a farther Enlargement.

2dly, Such Prayers facilitate our *leading a Quiet and Peaceable Life, in all Godliness and Honesty*; inasmuch as they express, in the most significant manner, our Love, and Zeal, and Reverence towards the Persons of Princes: and by such Instances of Duty invite them to make us suitable Returns. They effectually prevent those Jealousies, which Men cloathed with Sovereign Power are too apt to entertain of their Inferiors; and promote that good Understanding between them, which is the Common Interest, and should be the Common Aim of Both; and wherein the Security, and Happiness of all well-order'd States chiefly consists. The Holy Wishes and Vows we make for Their Welfare will engage their unwearied Endeavours for Ours; and the Thanksgivings put up by us for  
 the

the Tranquillity, we enjoy under their SERM.  
Reign, will move them to afford us fresh VIII.  
and frequent Occasions for New ones. 

Particularly, the Church is in This way best capable of giving Aid and Assistance to the State; and by that means, of deserving, and securing its Protection and Favour. This is the Spiritual *Tribute* and *Custom*, which she pays to the *Supreme* Magistrate; and for which she recieves, in Exchange, all the Temporal Blessings and Encouragement, that flow from the Munificence of Princes, and make her not only to Subsist, but Flourish.


3dly, *A Quiet and Peaceable Life* is the Fruit of these Publick Devotions; as We ourselves derive from thence a Spirit of Meekness, Submission, and Respect to our Superiors, and are led into an Habitual Love and Practice of those Mild Graces and Virtues, which we, at such times, solemnly exercise, and pray God to inspire us with; and which, when generally practis'd, make Crowns sit easy on the Heads of Princes, and render Them,

SER M. and their Subjects, equally a Blessing to  
 VIII. Each Other. Such as sincerely pray for  
 ~~~~~ the Prosperity of a State, are not likely to  
 disturb it themselves, or to push on others  
 into Attempts against the Peace of it:  
 They come out of the Church, still more  
 Devoted to their Prince, and Country,  
 than they went in; more Zealous, and  
 better Qualify'd to discharge their Duty to  
 the Publick, in their several Places and  
 Stations.

- IV. I have sufficiently explain'd the Exhortation of *St. Paul*, and the General Arguments, and Motives, by which he enforceth it. The best way of closing, and applying these Reflections will be, to take a View of the Character of those Princes, on whose behalf the Apostle presseth on the Christians of his Time the Practice of this Duty, and from thence to shew, how much stronger Obligations We are under of complying with it. And

Eph. ii.  
 12.

1<sup>st</sup>, The Princes, for whom the Apostle pleads, were Infidels, *without Christ*,  
*Aliens*

*Aliens from his Commonwealth, and* SEEM.  
*Strangers from the Covenants of his* VIII.  
*Promise; and such also they were, by*   
the Permission of God, to continue for  
Three Hundred Years after the Coming  
of our Saviour; that so his Gospel might  
not owe its first Establishment, in any  
Degree to the Secular Powers; but might  
spread and fix itself every where, without  
their Help, and against their Will; and  
manifest to all the World its Divine Ori-  
ginal, by the Miraculous Manner in which  
it should be propagated. The Kings of  
the Earth were not, during this Period,  
to promote the Belief of the Gospel, any  
otherwise than by Opposing it. When  
the rest of the World had come in, and  
own'd our Saviour, Then, and not till  
Then, were the Rulers of it to submit  
their Scepters to the Scepter of Christ, to  
Embrace, Protect, and Encourage his  
Doctrine, but not to Plant it; that, in  
This Sense also, the Prediction of our  
Lord concerning the Progress of his King-  
dom, and the Call of Believers, might



S E R M. be verifi'd, that *the Last of Men should be*  
 VIII. *First; and the First, Last.*

Mat. xx.  
 16.

If then, the Tribute of *Supplications*  
*and Thanksgivings* was due to those Hea-  
 then Princes, it is not much more due  
 to those who are Christians? Who are in-  
 grafted, as Principal Members, into that  
 Mystical Body, of which *Christ Jesus* is  
 the Head? Who, under him, are the  
 Chief Governors of his Church here be-  
 low, and Guardians of all her Sacred  
 Rights and Privileges? They beseech,  
 and they praise God together with Us,  
 in the same Common Assemblies; and  
 we are, therefore, doubly obliged to be-  
 seech, and to praise God for them. It  
 may be observ'd, in the

2d Place, That the *Roman* Emperors,  
 for whom the Apostle here directs that  
 Prayers should be made, were Usurpers  
 and Tyrants; who acquired Dominion  
 by invading the Liberties of a Free Peo-  
 ple, and were Arbitrary and Lawless in  
 the Exercise of it. Their Will and Plea-  
 sure was the sole Standard of Justice;  
 Fear was the Foundation of their Go-  
 vernment,

vernment, and their Throne was upheld  
only by the Legions which surrounded  
it.

S E R M.

VIII.



Even for such Rulers the first Christians were exhorted to Supplicate and give Thanks. How much more reasonably and chearfully do We, who are met here this Day, now offer up that Sacrifice for a *Queen*, who wears the Crown of her Forefathers, to which She is entitled by Blood, and which was placed on her Royal Head, not only with the Free Consent, but with the Universal Joy and Acclamations of her Subjects? Who rules a willing People, not by the Terror of Rods and Axes, but with the indulgent Tendernefs of a Common Parent? Who desires rather to be Belov'd, than Fear'd by them, and takes the trueft way toward securing their Utmost Love, by shewing, in every Step of Her Gracious Conduct, that She entirely loves them? Who hath no Interest, can have no Interest, separate from Theirs; and upon whom Malice itself could never fasten a Suspicion of her pursuing any

S E R M. Measures, which aim'd rather at Her Own

VIII. Glory, or Advantage, than the Common  
 ~~~~~ Good of *England*?

The Law is as much a Rule to Her, as to the least of Those who obey her; the first Measure, not only of Her governing Power, but even of Her Will to govern; and She makes no other Use of that Power, with which the Laws have invested Her, than to give Life and Force to them.

The Blessings of Her Mild and Merciful Government descend from the  
 Ps. lxxii. Throne upon Her People, *as the Small*  
 6. *Rain cometh down into a Fleece of Wool,* without Vehemence, or Noise; *like the Drops of Rain, that water the Earth,* gently, and insensibly. She draws up the Free Offering of our Love, and Duty, only to return them back again in Showers of Royal Bounty; which make glad the Land, and produce a mighty Increase.

Surely, our Lips cannot be better employ'd, than in Praising God for such mighty Benefits, as these, and for the  
 Blessed

Blessed Hand, through which he conveys S E R M.  
them ! VIII.

*Thirdly*, Those who govern'd the World, at, or near the Time of *St. Paul's* writing this Epistle, had no Personal Merits or Virtues to recommend them to the Prayers of the Faithful. *Tiberius, Caligula Claudius, and Nero*, under whom the Christian Faith was disseminated, and for all whom we may presume, the Faithful equally made their Supplications, were not only Bad Princes, but Bad Men ; infamous for their Lust, Cruelty, and other Vices : But they were in *Authority*, and that gave them a Right to be mention'd in the Sacred Offices of the Church.

How different from Their Case is Ours, whose Eyes behold on the Throne a *Queen*, who deserves to sit there, as well by Her Virtue, as by Her Birth ; Who, in that Publick and Exalted Station, preserves all the Innocence and Sanctity of a Private Life ; Who is Superior to all the Temptations, which a great Power suggests, and which nothing but as great

S E R M. Goodness ever overcomes; and to whom,  
 VIII. therefore, Her Subjects seem to be almost  
 as much oblig'd for the Shining Pattern of  
 unaffected Piety, which She sets them,  
 as for all the other Blessings of Her  
 Prosperous Reign. The Accession of  
 such a Queen to a Crown is indeed a Felicity,  
 which we may commemorate Annually,  
 with a Devout and Sincere Joy :  
 God grant, that we may commemorate it  
 Often ! And that we may still find more  
 and more reason thankfully to acknowledge it !

Finally, the Emperors of *Rome*, for whom the Primitive Christians were oblig'd to Pray, and to give Thanks, were their avow'd Enemies, and Persecutors ; who did, what they could, to hinder the Establishment of the Church of *Christ*, and to suppress those very Assemblies, wherein these Devotions were offer'd up to God in their behalf

Whereas She, for whom we now Adore and Bless the good Providence of God, is, by Her Office, and by her Inclination, the Defender, and Friend, the Patroness

troness, and Nursing-Mother of his Church establish'd amongst us. In this Church she was Baptiz'd and Bred; and, therefore, naturally loves it; She was made early and thoroughly acquainted with its Doctrine and Government, and, consequently values it; She hath been a Religious Frequenter of its Worship, and a steady Adherer to its Interest; and was prepared, in the late times of Distress and Danger, to Suffer with it, and for it. From her, therefore, now She is advanced to a Throne, all the Members, and Ministers of this Church may justly promise themselves, not only the Opportunity of *leading a Quiet and Peaceable Life*, (the utmost which the first Christians could hope for from Their Emperors) but Farther Advantages; not merely Protection, but all suitable Instances of Royal Favour and Encouragement.

Witness Her late Act of Princely Bounty and Compassion to the Poor Clergy of this Church: An Act, unequalled by any Prince, nay, by all our Princes,

SERM.

VIII.



SERM. Princes, since the Reformation; and  
 VIII. which (I was going to say) may atone for  
 Acts of a very different kind, done in  
 some of their Reigns. It griev'd Her Religious Heart to see, that Those, who  
*wait at the Altar*, should not *partake with the Altar*, in such a Measure, as is  
 requisite to preserve the Respect due to  
 their Characters, and to give Encouragement, and Success to their Labours. She  
 seem'd to hear them complaining, in the  
 pathetick Words of the Psalmist; *Have*  
 Ps cxxiii. *Mercy upon us, O Lord, have Mercy*  
 3. 4. *upon us; for we are exceedingly filled with Contempt: Our Soul is exceedingly filled with the Scorning of those that are at Ease, and with the Contempt of the Proud.* To rescue Them, and the Religion which they taught, from these Disadvantages, She extended her Beneficence in the most ample Manner, and took Care to have the good Effects of it perpetuated to Future Ages; thro' the Cheerful Assistance of those, who Compose this Illustrious Assembly, and whose Assistance, we are sure, will never be wanting, to perfect

fect any Work, that is begun for the Honour, Advantage, and Security of the Church of *England*. Scarce any but a Royal Heart was capable of entertaining so large a Design; as none but Royal Hands were, in a Degree, equal to the Execution of it.

The Benefaction is, indeed, worthy of Her, from whom it sprung; and carries in it Marks of a Wisdom, as Extensive as Her Goodness. For it is not confined, tho' Given, to those who Minister in Holy Things; the Happy Fruits, and Effects of it will, through this Channel, be conveyed to all Ranks and Orders of Men among us. All will share in that Munificence, which redounds to the Service of Religion, the Common Inheritance, and Blessing of All; and which gives Life and Weight to the Instructions of Those, who, as meanly as they may be thought of on other Accounts, are yet *the Ambassadors of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God*.


An unenvied Bounty, therefore, it needs must be; a Good, which cannot



S E R M. decently be *evil spoken of*, even by Such  
 VIII. (if there be any such) who wish not well  
 either to the Objects, or the Bestower of  
 it.

Great and groundleis Reproaches have, in other Respects, been cast on Our Church, as if there were still some Remains of Popery in it. Poor Vicarages are really Such; which took their Rise from the pretended Vicar of *Christ*, who endowed Abbies, and Monasteries, oftentimes, with the Spoils of Church-Livings, for the Support and Maintenance of his Spiritual Tyranny. 'Twas the great Blemish of our Reformation, that when Religious Houses were suppressed, some Part, at least, of their Revenue was not restored to its Original Use. But the Defects of that Time were, we Trust, reserv'd to be supplied by Her Majesty; and the goodly Frame of our Constitution is to be perfected, as it was modelled, by the Hand of a Woman.

A Prince, less solicitous for the Good of Religion, tho' intent on such a Work, would yet have deferred it, till the Expensive

pensive War, wherein we are engaged, SERM.  
was brought to a Close. But the Com- VIII.  
passion, and Godly Zeal of our Gracious   
Sovereign would not be checked by this  
Consideration: The Love of doing Good  
overcame all the Difficulties, which lay  
in the Way towards doing it. She  
thought, that to consecrate One Part of  
Her Revenue to so Pious an Use, would  
draw a Blessing on the Management of  
all the other Branches of it; That the  
*Cruse of Oil* would not fail ever the  
sooner, for bestowing a Portion of it on a  
Prophet, or any of the Sons of the Pro-  
phets; That the Earnest Prayers of Those,  
whom she thus relieved, would be as Ser-  
viceable to her in this War, as the In-  
come itself; and that Her Charity would  
in the Expressions of the Son of *Syrach*,  
*Fight for her against her. Enemies* Eccclus.  
*better than a mighty Spear and a Strong* xxxix. 19.  
*Shield.*

And, surely, the Unanimous and  
Early Dispatch of the Supplies, the Pre-  
sent Height of Publick Credit, and the  
Eagerness with which all her Subjects  
press

310 *The Duty of Publick Intercession, &c.*

SERMON. press to fill Her Coffers with their Loans,  
VIII. are not Signs, that She hath by any Act  
of misapply'd Bounty hitherto lost Ground  
either in the Favour of Heaven, or in the  
Affection, and Esteem of Her People.

May that God, whom she thus serves,  
and imitates, extend her Life and Reign  
beyond the Ordinary Term of either; and  
Crown every Year of them with new In-  
stances of his Goodness to Her, and to  
these Kingdoms!

*Now, unto the King Eternal, Immor-  
tal, Invisible, the only Wise God,  
be Honour, and Glory, for ever and  
ever! Amen.*

---

*The Rule of doing as we would be  
done unto;*

---

Explain'd in a

# S E R M O N

Preach'd before Her

# M A J E S T Y

A T


St. James's CHAPEL,

On Sunday, Nov. 5. 1704.


---

St. MATTH. vii. 12.

*All things, whatsoever ye would that Men  
should do unto you, do ye even so to  
them; for this is the Law and the  
Prophets.*

THE Sentence I have read unto S E R M.  
you, is very fitly plac'd towards I X.  
the Close of our Saviour's admirable   
Sermon

S E R M. Sermon on the Mount, as being, in

IX.  great Measure, the Epitome and Sum of what the Divine Preacher had there express'd more at large. Nor it is less fitly order'd to be recited at the Holy Table, in the most Solemn Part of the Service of this Day; on which we meet annually to Commemorate our Deliverance from the Attempts of those bloody and merciless Men, who seem to have out-done all their Predecessors and Successors in Wick- edness, by a notorious Contempt of this great Evangelical Rule, and of all the Principles of common Humanity. The Practice of those Conspirators was the perfect Reverse of this Precept; and we cannot, therefore, better be taught, or incited to detest the one, than by a due Il- lustration and Enforcement of the other. This I shall attempt, by offering to your Thoughts some Considerations, First, on the Rule here laid down; *All Things, whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto you, do ye even so to them?* and then on the short, but full *Encomium*, bestow'd upon it, that it is *the Law and the Pro- phets*;

*pbets*: Which shall be follow'd by some SERM.  
*Inferences*, naturally arising from the IX.  
 Whole; and the General Reflections ad-  
 vanc'd (tho' they may all along easily be  
 understood to refer, yet) shall afterwards  
 be particularly apply'd to the Subject of  
 this Day's Solemnity.

As to the Rule itself, we may distinctly  
 consider the just *Extent* and *Bounds* of  
 it, the *Reason* of its *Preferableness* to all  
 other Rules, in Point of *Evidence* and  
*Conviction*, the manifest *Equity* and *Ex-*  
*actness*, the peculiar *Properties* and *Ad-*  
*vantages* of it.

*All things whatsoever ye would that*  
*Men should do unto you, do ye even so to*  
*them!* Words of great Force and Energy:  
 and yet the most simple, plain, and per-  
 spicuous that can be! And which therefore  
 Commentators do (as they too often do)  
 obscure and perplex, by a Pretence of  
 Explaining. The only possible Doubt is,  
 concerning the *Extent* of the *Matter*  
 contain'd in them: For it must be al-  
 low'd, that there are many Cases, where-  
 in we are by no means oblig'd to grant

S E R M. that to others, which we ourselves perhaps (were we in their Circumstances, and they in ours) might be willing enough, unreasonably willing, to obtain from them. A Benefactor is not bound to comply with the Demands of such as ask unmerited Favours; tho' conscious, that He himself might be apt to make as extravagant Requests, were it his turn to be the Object of another Man's Beneficence. A Magistrate is not at Liberty, much less under any Obligation to turn the Edge of Justice from an importunate Offender; because, if He himself were the Criminal, he should certainly, and equally desire to escape unpunished. The Rule, therefore, which makes what we desire of other Men, the Measure of our dealing toward them, is to be understood not of vicious and excessive Desires, but of such only as are fit and reasonable; such Requests as we can, in our calmest Thoughts, justify to ourselves; such as, we are sure, may be made without Indecency, and cannot be refus'd without Inhumanity. And, under

der this necessary Limitation, the Precept S E R M.  
of the Text may be thus understood: IX.

“ Put thy self into such a Man’s Con-  
“ dition, and consider, what Treatment,  
“ what Favours, in That Case, thou  
“ might’st fairly and justly expect *from*  
“ Him; and be Thou fair to deal *with*  
“ Him, according to those thy just and  
“ regular Expectations.” And this I take  
to be the true Explication of that other  
equivalent Precept, given in the *Gospel*,  
to *Love our Neighbours as ourselves*;  
which we may then, in the most proper  
and strict Sense of the Words, be said  
to do, when we, first, place ourselves in  
our Neighbour’s stead, and, then, learn to  
love him; by considering, What Degree  
of Love and Good-will, of Forbearance  
and Forgiveness, we might, under that  
Change of Circumstances, challenge from  
him.

It may be thought, that the Rule,  
thus temper’d and qualify’d, will not be  
of any special Use, or Moment to us, in  
the Direction of our Practice; inasmuch  
as the Lines of Duty do not seem to be




S E R M. more clearly mark'd out, by this Method

IX. of Comparison, than they would have  
 been, by a direct Injunction to us, so to deal with others, as right Reason and our Consciences inform us, that we ought to deal with them. For, after all, when we have made Another Man's Case Our's, we are still left to judge, what, under such a Change of Circumstances, we might, in Equity and Reason, expect from him, before we can determine, after what manner we are to behave ourselves towards him : And, therefore, which way soever we take the Measure of our Duty ; to the Bar of Equity and Reason we must, it seems, in order to the fixing it always finally appeal.

'Tis true, we must— But the Maxim of the Text is That, which, of all others, doth most effectually assist us towards making a free Use of our Reason, and forming right Judgment of Things, on such Occasions : For, by the Means of it, we are able to consider our Duty without Prejudice, and to state the Bounds of it impartially and fairly. When we deter-  
 mine

mine amiss concerning the Obligations S E R M.  
incumbent upon us in Respect of other IX.  
Men; 'tis by Reason of that strong Weight  
of Self-Love, which, like a Bias, in-  
clines, and secretly sways our Minds  
towards that Side on which our Own  
Interest lies. To set this Error right,  
we suppose ourselves to be the Men,  
who are to receive this Treatment *from*  
Others, which we are about to practise  
*toward* Them; and, then, the same  
Selfish Principle makes that appear very  
hard and unreasonable, which before  
it inclined us to approve; and thus  
our warp'd and perverted Judgment,  
by being bent as much towards the  
Opposite Side, recovers its Straitness.  
The Rule of the Text, therefore, is  
at the Bottom, a wise Art of rebating  
one Degree of our Partiality by ano-  
ther; it enables us to take two several  
Views of our Duty, to eye it in diffe-  
rent Situations, and under different  
Lights; and by that means, more di-  
stinctly and thoroughly to discern it.  
And, in this Sense, *Measuring ourselves* 2 Cor. 13

SERM. *by ourselves, and comparing ourselves with*

IX. *ourselves, we take the surest way to be both*  
 *Just and Wise.*

There's nothing, we know, that gives a Man so true and lively a Sense of the Sufferings of Others, or restrains him so powerfully from Doing Unrighteous and Oppressive things, as his having smarted, formerly, himself, under the Experience of them. Now, the supposing another Man's ill Usage to be Ours, is, the giving ourselves a present Sense, as it were, a kind of feign'd Experience of it; which doth, for the time, serve all the Purposes of a True one.

Upon these Accounts it is, that the Precept of the Text carries greater *Evidence*, and a fuller Degree of *Conviction* in it, than any other Rule of Morality; its apparent *Equity* and *Reasonableness*, is what we are next to consider. And this is so plain a Point, as not to want, or indeed be capable of, a solemn Proof: For the Precept manifestly aims at That, which is the known Foundation of Equity and Justice, in all Matters of Inter-  
 course

*be Done unto, Explain'd,*

319

tercourse between Man and Man; the S E R M.  
reducing things to one common Stand- IX.  
ard, by the Application of which they

are all to be examin'd, and try'd. *Thou* Deut xxv.  
*shalt not have in thy Bag, or in thine* 13. 14.

*House*, (said the *Levitical Law*) *divers*  
*Weights, and divers Measures; a Great*  
*and a Small*, [i. e. one, wherewith to  
Buy; and another, wherewith to Sell:]  
*But thou shalt have a perfect and just*  
*Weight, a perfect and just Measure shalt*  
*thou have.* What is said here of ordi-  
nary Traffick and Dealing, holds as true  
of the General Commerce of Human  
Life, and that Exchange of Good Offices  
by which Society is upheld: There must  
be a *perfect Weight*, and a *just Measure*,  
by which all Men are mutually oblig'd  
to regulate their Conduct, in acting and  
suffering, in commanding and obeying,  
in giving and receiving; and this can be  
no other than the Equal and Righteous  
Rule of the Text, the *Doing* in all Cases,  
and to all Persons, *even as we would*  
*be done unto.* There is no one so ab-  
surd and unreasonable, as not to see and

SERM. acknowledge the Absolute Equity of

IX. this Command, in the Theory, however he may swerve and decline from it in his Practice; and to agree upon it as that Golden Mean, which, if universally observ'd, would make the World universally Happy; every Man a Benefactor, a Good Angel, a Deity, as it were, to his Fellow-Creatures; and Earth, the very Image of Heaven! I need, I can say no more, concerning the Reasonableness of this Precept: However, it may help to excite and quicken your Desires and Hopes of obeying it, if I proceed, as I propos'd, to point out some distinguishing *Properties* and *Advantages* of it.


The First of which is, that it is alike easy and obvious to all Understandings, to the meanest, and most ignorant Men, as well as to those of the greatest Parts and Improvements. God is, on this, as well as on other Accounts, no Respector of Persons: having made that which is most necessary, most common, and, consequently, suited this Principle, which

which all Men have equal Occasion to use, equally to the Apprehensions of all Men. They, therefore, who are incapable of long Trains in Deductions of Reason, and of adapting the several Rules of Morality to the various Circumstances of Action, are yet able (as able as the acutest Philosophers, or Casuists) to look into their own Hearts, to ask themselves this plain Question, and to return a clear Answer to it: "Would I myself be content, that others should thus deal with me? Why then should I so deal with any Man?"

Human Laws are often so numerous, as to escape our Memories; so darkly sometimes, and inconsistently worded, as to puzzle our Understandings; and their original Obscurity is not seldom improv'd by the nice Distinction and subtle Reasonings of those who profess to clear them: So that, under these several Disadvantages, they lose much of their Force and Influence; and, in some Cases, raise more Disputes than, perhaps, they determine. But here is a Law, attended with

S E R M.  
IX.

S E R M. with none of these Inconveniencies; the

IX.  grofseft Minds can scarce misapprehend it; the weakeft Memories are capable of retaining it: No perplexing Comment can easily cloud it; the Authority of no Man's Glofs upon Earth can (if we are but sincere) sway us to make a wrong Construction of it. What is said of all the Gospel-Precepts by the Evangelical Prophet, is more eminently true of this;  
 11. xxxv. *It is an Higb-Way; and the Way-faring*  
 8. *Man, tho' a Fool, shall not err therein.*

'Tis not enough that a Rule, which is to be of General Use, is suited to all Capacities; so that, where-ever it is represented to the Mind, it is presently agreed to: It must also be apt to offer itself to our Thoughts, and lie ready for present Use, upon all Exigencies, and Occasions. And such, remarkably such, is that which our Lord here recommends to us. We can scarce be so far surprized by any immediate Necessity of Acting, as not to have time for a short Recourse to it, room for a sudden Glance, as it were upon it, in our Minds; where it rests,  
 and

and sparkles always, like the *Urim* and *Thummim*, on the Breast of *Aaron*. SERM. IX.

There is no Occasion for us to go in Search of it to the Oracles of Law, dead, or living; to the *Code*, or *Pandects*; to the Volumes of Divines, or Moralists: *Quod petis, hic est*, we need look no farther than ourselves for it: For (to use the apposite Expressions of *Moses*) *This Commandment, which I Command thee this Day, is not bidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in Heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to Heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the Sea, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go over the Sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the Word is very nigh unto thee, in thy Mouth, and in thy Heart, that thou may'st do it*

DEUT XXX.  
11, 12,  
13, 14

It is moreover, a Precept, particularly fitted for Practice; as it involves in the very Notion of it a Motive, stirring us up to Do what it Enjoins. Other



S E R M. Moral Maxims propose naked Truths to

IX. the *Understanding*, which operate often  
 but faintly and slowly on the *Will* and  
*Passions*, the two Active Principles of  
 the Mind of Man: But it is the peculiar  
 Character of This, that it addresseth it-  
 self equally to all these Powers; imparts  
 both Light and Heat to us; and, at the  
 same time that it informs us certainly  
 and clearly, what we are to do, excites  
 us also, in the most tender and moving  
 manner, to the Performance of it. We  
 can see our Neighbour's Misfortune,  
 without a sensible Degree of Concern;  
 which yet we cannot forbear expressing,  
 when we have once made His Condition  
 our Own, and determined the Measure  
 of our Obligation towards him, by what  
 We ourselves should, in such a Case,  
 Expect from Him: Our Duty grows  
 immediately our Interest, and Pleasure,  
 by the means of this powerful Principle;  
 the Seat of which is, in truth, not more  
 in the Brain, than in the Heart of Man:  
 It appeals to our very Senses; and ex-  
 erts its secret Force in so prevailing a  
 way


way, that it is even Felt, as well as Under-  
stood by us.

S E R M.  
IX.

THE Last Recommendation of this Rule I shall mention, is its Vast and Comprehensive Influence: For it extends to all Ranks and Conditions of Men, and to all kinds of Action and Intercourse between them; to matter of Charity, Generosity and Civility, as well as Justice; to Negative, no less than Positive Duties. The Ruler and the Ruled, are alike subject to it; Publick Communities can no more exempt themselves from its Obligation, than Private Persons; *All Persons must fall down before it, all Nations must do it Service.* And, with respect to this Extent of it, it is, that our Blessed Lord pronounces it, in the Text, to be *the Law and the Prophets*. His Meaning is, that, Whatever Rules of the *Second Table* are deliver'd in the Law of *Moses*, or in the larger Comments and Explanations of that Law, made by the Other Writers of the Old Testament, [here, and elsewhere, styled *the Prophets*] they are all virtually comprised in this


Pf. lxxii.  
11.

S E R M. one short significant Saying, *Whatsoever*

IX. *ye would that Men should do unto you,*  
 *do ye even so unto them:* From this, as  
 from their Common Source, they were  
 all Originally derived; and into this they

Gal. v. 14. may be all ultimately resolved; *For all*  
*the Law is fulfilled in One Word,* saith  
 St. Paul, *even in This, Thou shalt Love*  
*thy Neighbour as thy Self:* And I have  
 shew'd You, that this Word, is the same  
 in Sense with the Word, or Precept of  
 the Text; tho' it be not deliver'd in so  
 clear, so expressive, and so convincing  
 a Manner. And this Word, therefore,  
 1 Tim. i. the same Apostle calls elsewhere, *The*  
 5. *End of the Commandment;* and St.  
 James ii. *James, The Royal Law:* That, (they  
 8. both mean) in which all the Lines of  
 Duty, relating to our Neighbour, center;  
 and under which, as under one common  
 Head and Principle, they may be reduc'd  
 and rang'd.

Various are the Uses, into which this  
 important Truth, thus handled, is capa-  
 ble of being improv'd.


For from hence I might, in the first SERM.  
place, take Occasion to consider, Whe- IX.  
ther, and how far, the Precept here   
given to be the *Whole*, not only of the  
*Law*, and the *Prophets*, but of the  
*Gospel* also; and what Evangelical Du-  
ties\* there are, which seem, as the  
Schools speak, to *transcend* it; to be  
(as Mysteries are, in respect of Reason)  
not indeed *against* this great Principle,  
but *above*, and *beyond* it; and such, as  
we cannot thoroughly account for, with-  
out taking the Consideration of another  
World into our Schemes and Reason-  
ings.

I might, in the next Place, proceed to  
shew, how large a Share Moral Truths  
have, even in the Body of reveal'd Doc-  
trines; since the Precept of the Text,  
which comprehends only the Duty we


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\* Grotius in Acts xv. 20. *Si quis dicere velit, hæc verborum summam comprehendendi omnia Evangelii præcepta, fallitur. Cum præceptum de Uno Deo colendo per Christum, de abnegatione Sui, de subeunda Cruce, non sint intra hunc ambitum: Aliis etiam non nisi obscure admodum hæc referri possunt.*

S E R M. owe to our Neighbours, is said to be *the*

IX. *Law and the Prophets.* An Expression,  not indeed to be taken rigorously, and in the Letter! But which may however be understood to imply, that, as a great Part of Holy Writ is employ'd in directly pressing the Duties abridg'd in this Precept, so the rest of it plainly points and refers to them: Even the highest Mysteries of Faith were not made known to us, without some Regard to our Improvement in Practical Virtues; and the Knowledge of those, unless it tends to quicken our Obedience to these, will be of no manner of Service to us, will neither better us in this World, nor save us in the next,

From the Assertion, in the Close of the Text, it may be yet farther, and more clearly inferred, That there is a Chain of Moral Reasoning, by which the several Duties of the Second Table are connected together, and have an orderly Dependance on One Common Principle, out of which they were drawn. That Virtue, therefore, is not the blind Homage


image of our Nature, arbitrarily exacted S E R M.  
 from us; but a Duty fitted and propor- 12.  
 tion'd to the Light of our Faculties, and   
 every way our *Reasonable Service*: In a ROM. XII.  
 word, that Morality is a true and proper <sup>1.</sup>  
 Science, and all the Parts of it capable of  
 strict Demonstration.

An Observation, of manifold and ex-  
 cellent Use! For it teaches us to reject the  
 Pretences of those vain and fanciful En-  
 thusiasts, who have fram'd a Rule of Duty  
 to themselves, as contrary to the com-  
 mon Sense and Reason, as it is to the  
 current Language of Mankind; so Re-  
 fin'd and Sublime, as to be utterly un-  
 intelligible and impracticable: It is not  
 to be learn'd, or confuted, in the Me-  
 thod of other Doctrines; It is to be made  
 out only by the Force of some Unaccount-  
 able Impressions; by a Light, that shines  
 inward, and which cannot be commu-  
 nicated, or discover'd. But *We have not* Eph. iv.  
*so learned Christ*: On the contrary, we <sup>20.</sup>  
 are assur'd, that we do our Lord and  
 Master good Service, such as he will own,  
 and reward, when we apply ourselves to

SERM. establish the Truths of our Religion upon

1X. Principles of Reason, and to argue Men  
 ~~~~~ into their Duty by appealing to Natural  
 Light, to the Certainty of first Principles, and to the Evident Deductions  
 which may from thence be made by the sure Rules of Discourse; and that we are not to regard the Censures of those, who, on this Account, shall style us mere Moral Teachers, and Carnal Reasoners; but will not allow us to speak by the Spirit, or to be at all acquainted with the Life and Power of Godliness. As if Religion were a thing design'd not to be understood, or made out! but lost some of her native Majesty and Force, when once we came to reason upon it!

Nor would it be an Unprofitable Reflection, to observe from hence the great Benignity and Goodness of God, who hath made even our *Own Will*, and our *Self-Love*, a complete Law of Action, and Measure of our Duty to us. *All things whatsoever ye would* [i. e. whatsoever Ye are willing] *that Men should do unto You,*


*You, do Ye even so to them!* Surely a very SERM.  
*Easy Yoke, and Light Burthen!* We may IX.  
 be averse, perhaps, from submitting to   
 the Divine Will, or to the Will of any of  
 our Fellow Creatures, exercising Autho-  
 rity over us: But can we be otherwise  
 than contented, and pleased, in submit-  
 ting to our *Own* Will, whatever it is?  
 And yet a Submission to *That*, (when  
 regulated by proper Circumstances, and  
 Views) is all that is required of us.  
 Merciful Saviour, thou saidst once indeed  
 to thy Father, as thou wert Man, *Not my* Luke xxi.  
*Will, but thine be done!* But who could 42.  
 expect that thou shouldst have said the  
 same thing to Us also, as thou art God!  
 However, thus in Effect, thou hast said,  
 in the Precept now before us. Teach  
 us, O Lord, by the means of this Pre-  
 cept, so duty to regulate our Wills, that  
 we may safely follow them! Make  
 Thy Will, Ours; that so, in doing our  
 Own Will, we may be sure to fulfil  
 Thine also!

We see from hence, how far the Gos-  
 pel is from suppressing, or checking the  
 Y 2 Principle



SERM. Principle of *Self-Love* in us, which it  
 IX. makes the Ground and Rule of all that  
 Love we owe to Others; and which, therefore we may innocently, nay, usefully carry to what Degree, what Height we please, if we do but take Care that the Love of our Neighbour keeps pace with that of our Self, and is govern'd by it. Very Extravagant, therefore, and Unwarrantable are those Flights of Devotion, which some Enthusiastical Saints of the Church of *Rome* have indulg'd themselves in; who make it necessary for every Christian, in order to his arriving at Perfection, to divest himself of all manner of Regard for himself; nay to despise, to hate, and to abhor himself, in the utmost Propriety of the Expression. Certainly, if what these Mystical Divines say, be true, impossible it is for a perfect Man to love his Neighbour at all: Since he is not allow'd, by their Scheme, to love himself; and yet is bound to love his Neighbour, as he loves himself, (or, which is all one, to do as he would be done unto) by our Lord's express Determination.

Several


Several other weighty Truths there are ; S E R M.  
which this fruitful Theme would suggest ; and most of those, I have mention'd, might deserve to be handled more largely. But I must contract my Thoughts on this Head, that I may have room to insist on one Plain, Useful Inference, wherein I am to apply the Doctrine hitherto deliver'd. It is this----If the Precept of the Text be so Fundamental and Necessary, so obvious and Easy, so Sure and Safe, so Full and Comprehensive a Rule of Life and Manners ; how inexcusable, upon all these Accounts, must those Persons be, who, throughout the whole Course of their Actions, shew, that they do not regard it ? I shall first, expostulate the Case with such as offend against this Precept at large ; and, then, consider that particular and flagrant Instance of the Breach of it which This Day affords us. IX. 

Are we, then, any of us, professed Contemners of Revealed Religion ? I hope, we are not ; but those who are, would still be thought to have a mighty


S E R M. Reverence for Reason (since by the Help  
 IX. of Reason it is, that they endeavour to  
 ~~~~~ throw off Revelation); and while they  
 have, this its Eldest and most Unquestion'd  
 Law should, methinks, be very Sacred to  
 them. What! Shall the great Masters of  
 Exact Thinking, and Idolizers of Reason  
 live in a perpetual Contradiction to the  
 first Principle of it! Will They, who  
 have so Little Light to guide themselves  
 by, (that of Nature alone) neglect to  
 make use even of that Little, which they  
 have? And yet, perhaps, there is no sort  
 of Men whatever, that offend so remark-  
 ably against the Evident Righteousness of  
 this Rule, as Those, who pretend most to  
 magnify the Principle from whence it  
 flows: There are none who pursue their  
 Pleasures so keenly, and sooth all their  
 Passions so carefully; are every way so  
 Selfish, and so directly set in Opposition  
 to this Generous and Equal Maxim; as  
 the Men, who will tell you, They adore  
 plain Common Sense, but cannot digest  
 a Mystery. From whence it is manifest,  
 that their Disesteem of Faith proceeds

not from any just Esteem they have of <sup>S E R M.</sup> Reason, or any Regard they bear to its <sup>I X.</sup> Laws; but merely from a Spirit of Libertinism, and a Desire of coming under as few Obligations as possible. 'Tis not a Freedom of Thinking, which they aim at; but a Freedom of Living, and of Doing what they please, without the Controul of Law, or Fear of Punishment. And, in order to this, one good Step is, to shake off Revealed Religion; and such an One, as is usually follow'd by another, the parting with All Religion, even That which Nature itself prescribes. To these Reasoners therefore we say, that the Rule of *doing as they would be done by*, is not (what they are so jealous of) any Imposition upon their Understandings, any puzzling mysterious Doctrine; it is all Pure Light, and Evidence, *and it is no Darkness at all.* <sup>John i.</sup> Why then do they not Submit to it? Why do they, of all Men Living, do as they would not be done by? Oppress and trample upon their Inferiors, Revile their Betters, and Supplant their Equals? Carry on their Unlawful De-

S E R M. fires, without Stint, or Bounds, to the

IX.  Injuring the Property of those who are too weak to contend with them, to ~~the~~ defaming their Neighbour's Reputation, or defiling his Bed? Why in a word, do they make themselves the only Centre of all their Actions, Wishes, and Designs? and regard nothing, that is without them any farther than it may be useful to their Purposes and Enjoyments? Let us see this lofty Race of Men in good earnest stoop to this plain Dictate of Reason; and then we shall be inclin'd to think them sincere, when they pretend to harken to the Voice of Reason, and to that only; and may have room to hope, that the good God, who sees them honestly practising all those Virtues which flow from this Rule, will add what is behind, and, in his own time graft Grace upon Nature.

But do'we (as every one, I trust, doth, who hears me this Day) profess ourselves to be the Disciples of *Christ*? And, can we think ourselves really to Be, what we profess, while we openly and avowedly  
break

break this great Precept of *Christ*; the SERM.  
main Hinge, upon which the Morality IX.  
of his Gospel turns? We may boast, if   
we please, of our having all Knowledge,  
and all Faith, and of our Understanding  
all Mysteries: But if we do not govern  
our Lives by this Truth, which is evi-  
dent by Nature, 'twill be to no purpose,  
that we firmly assent to those Truths  
which are revealed to us by Grace. We  
deny Christianity, indeed, if we reject  
These: But if we live in Contradiction  
to That, we renounce the Principles of  
Human Nature itself; without supposing  
which, there can be no Christianity. Let  
us Profess, and Believe what we will;  
unless We Do also as We would be done  
unto, all Our Faith, and Our Religion  
is vain. Nor is it Vain only, and Un-  
profitable, in Respect of our Selves; it is  
also of pernicious Consequence to Others,  
who from such Instances as these, will  
take Occasion to disparage the Influence  
and Efficacy of Revealed Religion, and  
to harden themselves in their Infidelity.  
The Ridiculers of Divine Faith, the De-  
spisers

S E R M. *spisers of Mysteries, never exercise their*

I X. *Scornful Talent with greater Pleasure, or*

~~~~~ *Success, than when they attack the Principles of Christianity, by comparing them with the Practice of Christians; especially in this Capital Article of all Schemes of Religion, the doing to Men as we would be done unto; and can point out our manifest and scandalous Violations of this plain Rule of Reason, while we pretend to embrace all the Sublime Doctrines, and to inherit all the glorious Advantages of a Divine Revelation. The Heathen*

Mat. xii.

41.

*Emperor, Severus, shall rise up in the Judgment with such a Generation of Christians, and condemn them: For, He, by the Light of Nature, was taught highly to reverence this Precept; it was written on the Walls of his Palace, and in the Banners of his Army; it was engrav'd in his very Heart, and transcribed from thence into his Practice. Would to God, that many of those pretended Vicars of Christ, who have since erected their Thrones in the Chief Seat of this Prince's Empire, had alike succeeded him*  
in

in an awful and Conscientious Regard S E R M.  
for this Excellent Maxim, and had been, IX.  
in that Respect, as good Christians, (or  
rather, as good Heathens) as He was !  
They would not then, have become the  
Authors and Fomenters of all that Discord  
and Confusion, all those Wars and Massacres,  
those Conspiracies and Rebellions,  
with which they have, for many Centu-  
ries past, shook the Thrones of Princes,  
and disturbed the Quiet of this Western  
World. Nor would they, in order to  
cover and palliate these Wicked Attempts,  
have openly encouraged the Casuists of  
their Communion to publish such loose  
and scandalous Systems of Morals, as, in-  
stead of being Comments on this Rule,  
are a perfect Contradiction to it, and are  
calculated, not to bring up Mens Obedi-  
ence to the Terms of the Gospel, but to  
bring down the Gospel-Terms, as near as  
can be, to the Infirmities and Failings,  
nay, to the Corruptions and Vices of Hu-  
man Nature.

The Time would fail me, should I at-  
tempt to mention the most remarkable  
Instances,



S E R M. Instances, which would readily offer them-

IX. selves, in either kind: That One Instance, which the Treason of this Day affords us, doth, in Effect, comprehend the Wickedness of all the rest; and is, when briefly insisted on, sufficient to raise in us a due Abhorrence of those Ungodly Principles and Practices, by which the Papacy hath enlarg'd its Interest, and establish'd its Spiritual Tyranny over the Understandings and Consciences of Men.

The Treason of This Day was a Contrivance, Wicked and Cruel beyond Example, and beyond Expression; Such, as the Ears of any Honest Heathen when they hear it related, must tingle at; Such as, if perpetrated in the Infancy of Christianity, would have gone near to have arrested the Course of it, in Countries as yet unconverted, and to have render'd even the Miracles, done for its Confirmation, insignificant and vain; In a word, Such, as nothing but the Malice of One of that Order, which hath been, ever since its first Erection, the Scourge and Pest of Mankind, could have pro-


projected ; nor Any, but some of its Bi-  
gotted and Furious Votaries, durst to  
have Executed. Blessed *Jesu* ! That ever  
Men, more particularly calling themselves  
by Thy Name, and pretending more im-  
mediately to devote themselves to Thy  
Service, should so far forget the Law of  
Humanity and Kindness, which was vi-  
sible in every Part of thy Behaviour,  
while thou wast on Earth, and is still le-  
gible in every Page of thy Gospel ! That  
they should be misled, by the perverse  
Comments of their Own Casuists upon  
this Law, so far, as to believe, that a  
Massacring Spirit was reconcileable to the  
Spirit of Christianity, and that the ge-  
nuine Principles of it could lead, or per-  
mit Men to overturn States and King-  
doms ! Such Ill Effects may spring from  
the best of Causes, Religion, when per-  
verted and abused ! Such Horrid Impieties  
may Men arrive at, when they have once  
fixed this Persuasion firmly in them-  
selves, That, how vile soever the At-  
tempts are, in which they engage, yet, if  
the End be Good, it justifies and sanctifies  
the

S E R M. the Means; and that the plainest Rules

IX. and Duties of the Gospel do not bind  
 ~ Those who are, as they imagine, propa-  
 gating the Interests of it.


Blessed be thy Name, O Lord, who  
 didst, as on this Day, after a marvellous  
 manner, disappoint their bloody De-  
 signs, when they were even ready to take  
 place, and didst suffer our Princes, our  
 Prelates, our Nobles, all the Chief Orna-  
 ments, and Supports of thy pure undefiled  
 Ps. cxxiv. Religion Established among us, to *escape*  
 7. out of their Hands, *even as a Bird from*  
*the Snare of the Fowler!* Surely, *the*  
 hxxvi. 10. *Wrath of Man* hath praised, and *shall*  
*praise thee:—The Remainder of Wrath*  
*shalt thou restrain.*

I need not endeavour to raise your  
 Thankfulness for the Mercies of this Day,  
 by shewing, that, as distant as they are,  
 they still belong to us. Some Blessings  
 wax not old, or decay; but, like the  
 Rod of the Tribe of *Levi*, laid up in  
 the Tabernacle, though seemingly *useless*  
 and dead, do yet shoot, and send forth  
 their Blossoms. And such is That we  
 now

now Commemorate; even Now we taste S E R M.  
 the sweet Fruits and Effects of it: For to I X.  
 this Day's Deliverance (this Day's Double )  
 Deliverance) it is owing, that we are  
 freed from the Fears of Papal Supersti-  
 tion and Bondage; that we enjoy all our  
 Religious, and Civil Liberties, all that  
 is dear and valuable to us, in respect of  
 This World, or Another; and even that  
 we see HER on the Throne (the Throne  
 of her Royal Ancestors, design'd this Day  
 for Slaughter) Who, by sitting there  
 protects and secures us in these Enjoy-  
 ments.

Great and manifold have the Instances  
 been of God's Interposition to rescue  
 this Church and Nation, when they most  
 needed it; nor is his *Hand yet shortned* Iſa. lii. 1.  
*that it cannot ſave*: For, behold, what  
 mighty things he hath lately wrought for  
 us! In how ſeaſonable and ſurprizing a  
 manner he hath bleſſ'd the Arms, which  
 have been taken up in Defence of his  
 True Religion, the Liberties of *Europe*,  
 and the Rights of Mankind, againſt the  
 Common Invader and Deſtroyer of all  
 of

SER M. of them? Whose haughty Heart he hath  
 1X. at last humbled, and stain'd his boasted  
 ~~~~~ Glory; the Vain Idol, which that proud  
 Monarch set up, and commanded all Na-  
 tions to fall down and worship! The  
 Success, which God hath given us, is  
 great in itself; but much greater in the  
 Consequences which it seems to promise.  
 For who knows but that, by this single  
 Blow, the Fate of that Kingdom may at  
 length be decided? of that Insolent King-  
 dom, who thought she had *put her Nest*  
 Num. XXIV. 21. *in the Rock*, whither none could Approach  
 to hurt her? And seem'd (in the Expressi-  
 1Sa. xlvii. 7, 8 ons of the Prophet) *to say in her Heart,*  
*I shall be a Lady for ever; I am, and*  
*none else beside me?* Who knows, but  
 that the mighty Hunter of Men may,  
 from this Moment, be obliged to fore-  
 go his Chace? May find it come to his  
 turn to fly, and be pursued every where?  
 and have the Preys, which he hath vio-  
 lently seiz'd, ravish'd again out of his  
 Hand! Who knows, but that the several  
 Victories which he hath meanly stolen,  
 or purchased, may now, after a more  
 fair

fair and generous manner, be regain'd? SERM.  
 and all the Laurels, he unjustly wears, IX.  
 be torn from his Temples, and plac'd on   
 the Head of *Another*, who better deserves  
 them? Certain it is, that God hath al-  
 ready begun to do these great Things for  
 us; which, unless we are wanting to our  
 selves, he will as certainly finish. Al-  
 ready, since this Blow was given, we  
 have seen the happy Effects of it, in the  
 Publick Confession of an Exhausted Ex-  
 chequer, and a Languishing Credit: Evils,  
 which, God be thanked, are neither felt,  
 nor feared by us at home, under the pre-  
 sent Vigilant and Wise Administration.

Do thou, O God, we beseech Thee,  
 go on to *strengthen the Thing which thou*  
*hast wrought for us! Shew thy Servants*  
*thy Work, and their Children thy Glory!*  
*And the Glorious Majesty of the Lord our* Ps. lxxvii.  
*God be upon us! Prosper thou the Work* 28.  
*of our Hands upon us! O, prosper thou* xc. 16, 17.  
*our Handy-work.*



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*Of Religious Retirement.*

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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

Q U E E N

A T


St. James's CHAPEL,

On Friday, March 23. 1704.

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MATTH. xiv. 23.

*When he had sent the Multitude away,  
he went up into a Mountain, apart, to  
Pray.*

**I**T hath been disputed, which is a SERM.  
State of greater Perfection, the So- x.  
cial, or the Solitary; whereas, in Truth,   
neither of these Estates is complete with-

Z 2

out



S E R M. out the Other ; as the Example of our  
 x. Blessed Lord (the Unerring Test and  
 ~~~~~ Measure of Perfection) informs us. His  
 Life, (which ought to be the Pattern of  
 Ours) was a Mixture of Contemplation  
 and Action, of Austerity and Freedom :  
 We find him often, where the greatest  
 Concourse was, in the Market-Places,  
 in the Synagogues, and at Festival Enter-  
 tainments ; and we find him also retiring  
 from the Crowd into a Desert, or a  
 Garden, and there employing himself in  
 all kinds of Religious Exercise, and In-  
 tercourse with God, in Fasting, Medita-  
 tion, and Prayer. In Imitation of his  
 Spotless Example, we *may*, doubtless,  
 lead Publick Lives, Innocently, and  
 Usefully ; Conversing with Men, and  
 doing good to them ; mutually sowing,  
 and reaping the several Comforts and  
 Advantages of Human Society. But be-  
 cause the Pleasures of Conversation, when  
 too freely tasted, are Intoxicating, and  
 Dangerous ; because the Temptations we  
 there meet with are many and mighty ;  
 and even where the Spirit is *Willing* to  
 resist,

resist, yet the *Flesh* is often *Weak*; we ought, therefore, to lessen the too great Complacence we are apt to have in such Satisfactions, by fit Intermissions of them; to strengthen our selves for such Publick Encounters, by our Religious Privacies; to retire from the World sometimes, and Converse with God, and our own Consciences; examining the State, and fortifying the Powers of our Souls, in Secrecy and Silence: We must do, as our Lord did, *Send the Multitudes away, and go up into the Mountain, apart, to Pray.*

I shall, from these Words, take Occasion to discourse to you concerning the Great (but much Neglected) Duty of *Religious Retreat* and *Recollection*. I shall, first, briefly shew you, under what Limitations I would be understood to recommend the Duty; and, then, What the Advantages are, which arise from a devout and discreet Performance of it.

I mean not to press upon you that sort of Retirement, which is so much esteem'd and practis'd in the Church of

SERMON. *Rome*; where all Perfection is reckon'd  
 x. to consist in Solitude, and no Man is  
 ~~~~~ allow'd capable of arriving at the Height  
 of Virtue, who doth not strip himself  
 of all the Conveniencies of Life, and  
 renounce all manner of Acquaintance  
 with the World, and the Things of it:  
 I see not, wherein this State of Life  
 claims the Pre-eminence over all others;  
 how it is founded in Nature, and Reason;  
 what particular Example, Precept, or  
 Direction there is in the Gospel, inviting  
 us to it. *John* the Baptist is, indeed, there  
 represented, as sequestering himself from  
 Human Converse, and spending his time  
 in the Wilderness: but as he is said to  
 have come in the Spirit and Power of  
 Elias, (a Spirit far different from the  
 Spirit of the Gospel) and did, therefore,  
 professedly imitate that Prophet, in his  
 severe manner of Life, and Look, and  
 Diet, and Garb, and Behaviour, and  
 Doctrine; so his Example belonged, ra-  
 ther to the *Mosaic State*, under which  
 he lived and taught, than to the *Christian*  
*Dispensation*, which began, where his  
 Preach-

Luke i.

17.

ix. 55.

Preaching ended. Nor did even the S E R M.  
 Baptist himself propose his own Practice, X.  
 as a Pattern to his Followers: on the contrary, when *the People, the Publicans,*  
*and the Soldiers* enquir'd of him, *what*  
*they should do, to flee from the Wrath to*  
*come,* he did not exhort them to go out  
 of the World into the Wilderness; but  
 gave them such Directions only as related  
 to a faithful Discharge of their Duty in  
 their several Stations and Callings: And  
 when afterwards our Saviour began to  
 enter on his Ministry, and to appear  
 as our Saviour, by publishing the Gospel  
 of his Kingdom, we find nothing either  
 in his Actions, or his Doctrine, to coun-  
 tenance that Recluse and Solitary State,  
 which some since, who would be thought  
 best to have imitated his Example, and  
 obey'd his Precepts, have so zealously  
 espous'd and practis'd. His Divine Dis-  
 courses were chiefly spent in pressing  
 Men to exercise those Graces which  
 adorn the Sociable State: even his first  
 Sermon on the Mount to the Multitude  
 did, in the Entrance of it, recommend

S E R M. and enjoin a Publick, Conspicuous, and

X. Exemplary Virtue; And (with some Allusion, perhaps, to ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> Eminence on which he sat, and the Company which surrounded him) he then likened his Di-

Mat 7. sciples to *a City set on an Hill, that cannot be hid*; he commanded them to

Ib. v. 15. *put their Light in a Candlestick, not un-*

Ib. v. 16. *der a Bushel; and so to make it shine before Men, that They seeing their good Works, might glorify their Father which is in Heaven.*

Far be it from me, however, to condemn all those Good and Holy Persons, who have betaken themselves to this Solitary and Austere Course of Living. Doubtless, many of them were acted by a sincere, but misguided, Principle of Piety; the Fruits of which, tho' mix'd with a great Alloy of Superstition, did yet, in diverse Respects, redound to the Credit of Religion, and the Good of Mankind. But supposing these to be Real, yet they were, I say, Uncommanded Instances of Virtue; not possible, or, if possible, not fit to be practis'd by the  
far

far greater Part of Christians. The Re- S E R M.  
treat, therefore, which I am speaking of, X.  
is not that of *Monks* and *Hermits*, but  
of Men living in the World, and going  
out of it for a Time, in order to return  
into it; it is a Temporary, not a Total  
Retreat; such as we may leave off, or  
resume, at Pleasure, according as we  
have Need of it, or an Opportunity for  
it; such, as is consistent with all the  
Business, and even with the Innocent  
Pleasures of Life; and is so far from  
interfering with the Duties of our Pub-  
lick Offices and Stations, that it disposes  
and enables us for the better Discharge  
of them. 'Tis this Sort of Retreat which  
may properly be made the matter of  
general Exhortation from the Pulpit, be-  
cause it is really matter of general Obli-  
gation to every good and sincere Chri-  
stian.

No Man is, or ought to be so deeply  
immers'd in the Affairs of this World,  
as not to be able to retire from them  
now and then into his Closet, there to  
mind the Concerns of another. Every  
Day

S E R M. Day of his Life, Early, or Late, some

x. Moments he may and must find to bestow this Way; the Lord's Day particularly is a great Opportunity of this kind, which can never wholly be neglected without Indevotion, or even without Scandal. And such also is the Annual Season of Recollection in which we are now far advanc'd; not, I trust, without having employ'd it, in some measure, to those good Purposes for which it was intended. At such Times as these, either when the Labours and Ordinary Occupations of Life cease, or when Publick Diversions and Entertainments are forbidden; Then every One, the Noble and the Mean, the Wealthy and the Poor, hath it certainly in his Power, if it be but in his Heart, to retire: to step aside from the Hurry and Vanities of Life, and all the Allurements of Sense, and to Examine, and Improve, and Enjoy himself in private.

That we may be all excited so to do, I shall proceed, in the next Place, to represent to You the several Advantages attending

attending this Religious Practice; whether we consider it as a Means of effacing the ill Impressions made on our Minds in Daily Conversation, or as an Opportunity of pursuing farther Degrees of Perfection and abounding in all the Methods of Spiritual Improvement. SERM.  
x.

The Advantages of the first kind, which it affords us, are plainly such as These; That it unites and fixes our scattered Thoughts; places us out of the Reach of the most Dangerous Temptations; frees us from the Insinuating Contagion of Ill Examples, and hushes and lays asleep those troublesome Passions, which are the great Disturbers of our Repose and Happiness.

A Diffipation of Thought is the Natural and Unavoidable Effect of our Conversing much in the World; where we cannot help squandering a way a great deal of Our Time upon Useless Objects, of no true Worth in themselves, and of no real Concern to us. We roul on in a Circle of vain empty Pleasures, and are deliver'd over continually from one slight Amusement



s e e M. ment to another; ~~sever~~ seemingly very  
 x. Busy, and ever really very Idle; apply-  
 ing our selves without Respite to That,  
 which it becomes us most to neglect, and  
 utterly neglectful of that One thing Ne-  
 cessary, which it becomes and behoves  
 us most to pursue. This gives us by De-  
 grees such a Levity and Wantonness of  
 Spirit, as refuses Admittance to all se-  
 rious Thoughts, and renders us incapa-  
 ble of Reflection: makes our Closet a  
 Terrible Place to us, and Solitude a Bur-  
 then. To retrieve our selves from this  
 vain, uncertain, roving, distracted way  
 of thinking and living, it is requisite to  
 retire frequently, and to Converse much  
 with (what We above all things Love,  
 and yet above all things hate to converse  
 with) Our Selves; to inure our Minds  
 to Recollection, to fix them on the great-  
 est and most concerning Objects, those  
 which Religion suggests, and which will,  
 by their Importance, deserve, and en-  
 gage, and command our Attention; till  
 the busy Swarm of vain Images, that  
 besets us, be thoroughly dispersed, and the  
 the

the several scatter'd Rays of Thought, by being thus collected together, do by little and little warm our Frozen Hearts, and at last produce an Holy Flame.

S E R M.

X.

The Expedience of Retirement is yet greater, as it removes us out of the way of the most pressing and powerful Temptations that are incident to Human Nature. Ye all know by Experience, that These meet us most frequently, and affect us most strongly in Society; where our Senses, the great Inlets of Temptation, are most awaken'd, and tempting Objects, by their Number and Nearness, make the most Vivid and Lasting Impressions upon us. \* Indeed, there is no Place, no State, or Scene of Life, that hath not its proper and peculiar Temptations; even Solitude it self is not without them: but they are few, and faint, in Comparison with those to which our Appearance

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\* Ο δὲ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ εἶργον, πάλιν πάλιν ἐπὶ τὸν αὐτοῦ ἑαυτοῦ ἀποστρέφεται καὶ ἀποστρέφεται ἀποστρέφεται ἐπὶ τὸν αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ' ἀποστρέφεται ἐπὶ τὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν αὐτοῦ ἀποστρέφεται, ἀλλ' οὐ μὴ ἀποστρέφεται ἑαυτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν αὐτοῦ ἀποστρέφεται ἐπὶ τὸν αὐτοῦ.

\* *Expositio. vnde hinc est. p. 230. Edit. p. 230. hinc est.*

SERM. on the great Stage of the World exposes  
 x. us; and whenever they attack us in our  
 ~~~~~ Recesses, they do, or may find us prepar'd, and upon our Guard; we are then at leisure to encounter them, and have Helps near at Hand, which, if made Use of, will enable us to decline, or baffle them. Whereas, in Publick, we are merely Passive to such Impressions; which strike our Minds so violently, and succeed each other so fast, that we have no Opportunity, no Strength, no Inclination almost to withstand them.

The great Risque which Virtue runs in Company, is, from the Neighbourhood of Ill Examples, which are of so Contagious a Nature, that, if we live much amongst them, we shall as surely be corrupted by them, as he that often breathes in Ill Air, will at last partake of the Infection. 'Tis dangerous for the most Innocent Person in the World to be too frequently and nearly a Witness to the Commission of Vice and Folly. Such Views lessen the Natural Horror we have for such Actions; and render the Thoughts  
 of

of them more Familiar, and less Displeasing to us. Especially, when we are us'd to see Ill Things practis'd by Persons, whom we regard; the favourable Opinion we have of the Doer extends itself to the Action done; and leads us insensibly from seeing to approving, and from approving to imitating. And thus being (the very best of us) prone to do Evil, and Living in the midst of Evil; being attack'd thus from without, and betray'd from within; we are not capable of making an effectual Resistance: The only Refuge, we have, is in Retreat, where we may at leisure correct the Ill Impressions that have been made upon us; and by Disuse, and Distance, weaken the Force of those Ill Influences which we could not wholly avoid.

Another Advantage which Retirement affords us, is, that it calms and composes all the Passions; those especially of the tumultuous kind; which, while the Business and Pleasures of Life possess our Hearts, are under a Restless and Violent Agitation. We seldom mix long in Conversation,

S E R M.

X.

SERMON. verſation, without meeting with ſome


X. Accident that ruffles and diſturbſ us ; ſomewhat that plays either upon our Hopes, or our Fears ; our Aversions, or Deſires. An Injurious, or Slighting Word is thrown out, which we think our ſelves oblig'd to reſent ; or ſome Innocent Expreſſion of ours is miſinterpreted and reſented by Others, and That provokes a Return. Our Enemy comes in our way, and kindles Thoughts of Aversion and Hatred in us ; we look upon thoſe, who are above us in all the Advantages of Life, with Envious Eyes, and with Contempt on thoſe who are beneath us. Thus are we delivered over from Paſſion to Paſſion, toſs'd and diſquieted in our Minds, during the Intercourſe we maintain with the World. But when we quit it, and retire, all theſe Winds are preſently laid, and there is a perfect Calm. The Objects, which excite us, being removed, our Appetites alſo Languish and Die away ; we poſſeſs our Souls in Patience and Peace, and enjoy a profound Tranquillity and Reſt, the Pleaſure of which is great to thoſe

those who are so happy as to have a Re- s e e m.  
lish for it; and is i i hanc'd by being always x.  
tasted with Innocence. ~~~~~

Wouldst thou then be free from Envy  
and Scorn, from Anger and Strife? fly  
from the Occasions of them; steal away  
from the great Scene of Passion and  
Business into thy Privacy, shut the Doors  
about thee, *Commune with thine Own* Psa. iv. 4  
*Heart in thy Chamber, and be still.*  
There all Animosities are forgotten, all  
Pursuits, all Competition cease; there  
all Marks of Distinction are laid aside; the  
Great and the Lowly, the Prince and the  
Subject are upon the Level; equally un-  
der the Eye of one Common Master,  
equally desirous of pleasing Him, and  
mindless of lesser Interests and Concerns.  
There the Vanities and Vexations of this  
World are shut out, and the Considera-  
tions of another are let in; and our Soul  
enjoys that sweet Contentment and Re-  
pose, which it enjoys no where else, on  
this side Heaven.

I have hitherto consider'd the Useful-  
ness of Religious Retreat, with Respect

S E R M. to some Ill Impressions made upon us in

X. Conversation, which it removes: I shall  
 now consider it, as Productive of the  
 Chief Christian Graces and Virtues; in as  
 much as it affords us the best Opportunity  
 of knowing *God*, and our *Selves*, and of  
 taking all the proper Methods to recon-  
 cile and approve ourselves to God, which  
 are Consequent upon such a Knowledge.  
 For, tho' it be expedient for every Rank  
 and Order of Men, yet it is more particu-  
 larly advantageous to Penitents, to go up  
 with our Saviour *into the Mountain, apart,*  
*to Pray.*

'Tis our Duty, and our Privilege, our  
 Chief Honour and Happiness, to be  
 acquainted with *God*; and this Acquain-  
 tance can never be made, but, where we  
 divest ourselves of all Other Acquaintance,  
 in our Closets. When we have call'd off  
 our Thoughts from Worldly Pursuits and  
 Engagements, then (and not till then)  
 are we at Liberty to fix them on the best,  
 the most deserving, and desirable of Ob-  
 jects, *GOD*; to study his blessed Nature  
 and Perfections, to imprint a filial Awe  
 of

JOB XXII.  
 21.


of him on our Hearts, a lively Sense of S E R M.  
his perpetual Inspection and Presence; x.  
to abound in all the Methods of Devout  
Application to him, in Acts of Petition  
and Praise, of Joy and Wonder, of Sub-  
mission and Hope, of Love and Affiance;  
to open all our Wants, and impart all our  
Griefs to him, and to express in the most  
significant manner we are able, our En-  
tire and Unlimited Dependance upon  
him; till, by often dwelling on such  
Thoughts and Reflections as these, we  
have made them Familiar, Habitual, and  
Natural to us; and can have as Easy and  
Delightful a Recourse to God, in all Ac-  
cidents, and upon all Occasions, as a Son  
hath to a Belov'd and Loving Parent,  
who, he knows, is at all Times able to  
assist, and ready to receive him: In a  
Word, till we can look up to God in  
Each Step of our Conduct, as the Su-  
preme End and Guide of all our Actions,  
the fix'd Centre of all our Wishes, De-  
sires, and Designs; till we bring our  
selves to Love Nothing in Competition  
with him, nothing but in order to the



SERM. Enjoyment of him; and resolve to Do  
 X. nothing, and Be nothing, but what we.  
 ~~~~~ are sure will please him.


Can any thing refine, raise, or ennoble our Natures more than such a Conversation as This, which is thus begun, improv'd, and perfected in Solitude? Shall we not think it worth our while, to cease for a time from cultivating Useless and Perishing Friendships with Men, that we may be the more at Leisure, and the better qualify'd, to enter into this Divine Correspondence, which is of the vastest Concern to us, and upon which our Everlasting Welfare depends?

While indeed our Hearts are deeply engaged in the Concerns of this World, we cannot well relish the Pleasures of such a Spiritual Commerce: But, after we have once accustomed and inured our selves to it, we shall find it the most delightful Entertainment of the Mind of Man, pleasing as Light to the Eyes, *sweeter than Honey and the Honey-Comb*. Sensual Men may make sport with such a Pretence, and call it Enthusiasm, and the

the Product of an Heated Imagination ; S E R M.  
 but They, that taste the Satisfaction, x.  
 know it to be real, and would not part   
 with it for all the Delights this World  
 can afford ; and which (in the disparag-  
 ing Phrase of the Apostle) they *count but* Phil. iii. 8.  
*as dung*, in comparison of *the Excellency*  
*of this Knowledge of God, and Christ*  
*Jesus.*

As Religious Retirement is a great Means of advancing us in the Knowledge of God, so doth it assist us towards attaining a True Knowledge of Ourselves ; towards searching and trying all our ways, and getting a right Information concerning the State of our Consciences. He that will thrive in his Temporal Affairs, must often balance his Accounts, examine his Gains, and his Losses, and see what Proportion they bear to each other ; consider, where his Conduct may have been faulty in any Respect, and how for the future to rectify it. The same Vigilance and Care is requisite in Relation to our Spiritual Concerns also ; and we can never exert it effectually but in

S E R M. the Closet, where Privacy and Silence

X. Befriend our Enquiries. When the Im-  
 portunity of Outward Objects ceases,  
 when the Noise and Avocations of a  
 troublesome World are at a Distance, we  
 may enter upon these Searches without  
 Difficulty, and finish them without Inter-  
 ruption. We may then look inwards,  
 and take a Distinct View of what at  
 Other times passes there unobserv'd; of  
 our hidden Inclinations and Aversions,  
 of the Springs which secretly move us  
 in all our Pursuits, of the Temptations  
 that beset us hardest, and most frequently  
 foil us, of the Ground that we have  
 lost, or got, in our several Encounters.  
 And when we are advanc'd thus far in  
 the Knowledge of ourselves, and of our  
 Ruling Sins and Infirmities, we have taken  
 the most useful and necessary Step towards  
 abounding in the Three great Duties of  
 the Penitent, *Contrition*, *Resolution*, and  
*Prayer*.

*Contrition* is an holy Grief, excited by  
 a lively Sense, not only of the Punish-  
 ment due to our Guilt, (That the Schools  
 call

call *Attrition*) but likewise of the Infinite Goodness of God, against which we have offended; accompany'd with a Detestation of our Sin, and of ourselves, for the sake of it. At this Act of the Mind Repentance (properly speaking) begins; and this Godly Concern of Heart is rarely attain'd, to be sure, it can never be duly exerted, and improv'd, but 'n private. And, therefore, in the story of St. *Peter* we may observe, that, as soon as a Conviction of his Guilt had seiz'd him, it is said, that *he went out, and wept bitterly*; he withdrew into a Secret Place, where he might mourn his own Fall with Freedom; where he might feed, and raise up to a due Height the Inward Anguish he felt, and Indulge himself in all the Expressions of sincere Sorrow. The Wounds of Conscience, like other Wounds, though generally receiv'd in Publick, must always be healed in Private: There they may be laid open and searched to the bottom, there the raging Smart of them is best endured, and there suitable Remedies are most

S E R M.

X.




Mat. xxvi.  
75.

**SERM.** easily, and most usefully apply'd; where

**x.** Leisure, and Rest, Silence, and a Proper  
 ~~~~~ Discipline assist the Patient, and promote  
 the Cure.

The next Step to Contrition is, *Resolution*, or a firm immutable Purpose of Heart, never more to allow ourselves in that Transgression, which we now abominate, and deplore. And, in order to the forming such a well-weighed and stable Resolution, there must be a calm and clear Foresight of the Difficulties which may attend the Execution of it, and a just Computation of our Own Strength to bear up against them; we must deliberately consider, under what Circumstances the Temptation, against which we are now arming ourselves, hath beset us hardest, and how, for the future, we may best decline them; what Helps and Supports we have by Experience found most useful, and how, in the Day of Trial, we may be secure of them; to what a broken dispirited State of Mind we have already reduced ourselves, by so often and lightly departing from what

we

we had purpos'd; and, with how much SERM.  
 greater Difficulty, every time that we x.  
 give way, we recover our Ground. I need   
 not prove to you, that these, and the like  
 Reflections, which are necessary towards  
 our resolving well and wisely, can never  
 be dwelt on, in all their due Compass and  
 Force, but at Leisure, and in Sacred Retirement.  
 Doubtless, the good Psalmist had  
 been some time in his Closet, and on his  
 Knees, when he utter'd those Emphatical  
 Words; *I have sworn, and am stedfastly* Psal. cxix.  
*purposed, to keep thy Righteous Judge-* 100.  
*ments.*


But of all the Duties of the Penitent,  
 that which Privacy best Qualifies us for,  
 is \* *Prayer*, which it enables us to per-  
 form in such a Manner, as is likely to  
 be most prevalent and effectual. Great  
 indeed is the Excellence and Advantage

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\* Τῶνδε ἵκανα οἷς τὸ ἔξῃ ἀναθεῖναι, παιδεύων ἡμᾶς  
 ὅτι καλὸν ἡ ἐρημία ἢ μόνησι, ὅταν ἐντυγχάνωμεν διὰ τῆς  
 θρησκείας. Διὰ τὸ τοιοῦτον οἷς τὰς ἐρήμους ἀποστοί, καὶ ἐν  
 διασποραῖς πολλὰς ἐνχόμεθα, παιδεύων ἡμᾶς καὶ τὸν  
 ἀπὸ τοῦ καὶ καὶ τῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ τίτου διακρίβειν ἐν ταῖς  
 ἐρημίαις ἀπομονώσας· ἐν ταῖς γὰρ μοναῖς ἡ ἔρημος, καὶ γαλήνη,  
 καὶ ληπὴν, ἀπὸ τῆς ἀπαιτήσεως διακρίβειν ἡμᾶς. Chrysost.  
 ad Matt. xiv. 23.

S E R M. of Publick Devotions, as they testify  
 X. our Common Reverence of the Divine  
 Being, as they are best fitted to implore,  
 or to acknowledge Publick Blessings, and  
 as they excite a Publick Emulation in the  
 Breasts of Sincere Worshippers. However,  
 in some Respects, they must yield the  
 Preheminence to Closet-Prayer; particularly  
 in This, That they are not so well calculated,  
 as That, to procure Ease, and Repose of  
 Conscience to the Sinner, and to adjust  
 particular Accounts between God and our  
 Souls. For it is of special Use to this  
 Purpose, in these Three Respects; as it  
 affords us the best Opportunity of being  
*Fix'd, Fervent,* and *Circumstantial* in our  
 Addresses to God.


In the Solemn Service of the Sanctuary,  
 let us endeavour never so much to prevent  
*Distractions*, we shall now and then be  
 sensible of them: Outward Objects will  
 break in upon our Senses, and divert the  
 Application of our Minds; even the Length  
 of the Office, and the Daily Return of the  
 same Forms, will,  
 to

to Persons not rightly Qualified and Dis- SERMON.  
posed, occasion Spiritual Languors and X.  
Wandrings. And this is not the Case   
only of Stated Forms; the same Incon-  
venience doth, in a much higher Degree,  
belong to Unpremeditated Prayer; the  
Hearers of which must first judge of the  
Fitness, both of the Matter and the Ex-  
pression, before they can reasonably join  
in what they hear. And thus the No-  
velty of the Phrase, instead of fixing,  
breaks and divides the Attention of a  
sincere Worshipper; his Curiosity indeed  
may be awaken'd by this Means, but his  
Devotion is certainly check'd and sus-  
pended. Now these Obstacles are all  
remov'd, these Inconveniences are pre-  
vented, when we pray in Private. We  
are then placed immediately under the  
Eye of God, which awes us; but under  
no Other Eyes, and in the Neighbour-  
hood of no other Objects, which might  
divert or discompose us: We are at Li-  
berty to employ that Part of our Time  
in the Performance of this Service, when  
we find ourselves best disposed for it;



SERMON. to make Choice of our own Thoughts,  
 X. and our own Words; such, as are best  
 suited to our present Necessities, and Desires: And what is thus passing within our selves, we cannot but perceive, and attend to. We may break off from the Duty, whenever we find our Attention flags; and return to it at a more seasonable Opportunity.

Nor are we capable, at such times, of being more *Fix'd* only, but likewise more *Fervent* and *Inflam'd*. True Religion is ever modest and reserved in its Demeanor, when it appears in Publick; jealous of doing any thing that may favour of Vanity and Ostentation; unwilling to allow itself in any such Earnestness of Speech, or Singularity of Behaviour, as may call off the Eyes and Ears of Others to observe them: It contents itself, for the most Part, with a Compos'd and Serious Look, with a Simple and Unaffected Carriage. But when Publick Regards and Restraints are taken off, the Pious Soul may then let itself loose into the highest Fervors of Zeal, into the freest Raptures

Raptures of Thought, and into a suitable S E R M.  
Vehemence and Warmth of Expression: x.  
There is no sort of Holy Address, which   
it is not then allow'd to make use of; no  
outward Signs of Devotion and Revere-  
rence, which it may not decently abound  
in.


There is yet another great Advantage  
that attends our Private Devotions; They  
give us Leave to be as Express and *Parti-*  
*cular* as we please in our Representations.  
In the Church, the Sinner and the Saint,  
Men of all Ranks, Distinctions, and At-  
tainments in Virtue, must join in the  
same Common Forms: And though each  
of them may, by a sudden Glance of  
Mind, adapt the General Words to his  
own Circumstances; yet one Branch of  
the Service presses too fast upon another,  
to admit of any Pause between them.  
And They, therefore, who lie under the  
Load of any Particular Guilt, rise not  
from their Knees with so much Com-  
fort, as they would have done, had they  
been at Liberty to dwell upon it, and  
confess it in all its Aggravations. . This  
**Liberty**

**S E R M.** Liberty their Closet, and that alone, can afford them. There they may expiate as much as they please upon their Wants and Unworthiness: There they may pour out all their Complaints to God, and lay open all their Grievs and Fears, and send up all their Thanks and Acknowledgements: There Importunities are not forbidden, Repetitions are not unbecoming; but they may persist Knocking till it is Open'd to them, and Asking till they have Obtain'd.

X.  


These are some of the many Spiritual Advantages, which the present Hours of holy Recollection, when well employ'd, will be sure to afford us. And God grant, that All of us may, as we have Opportunity and Leisure, so employ them!

Indeed, the greater our Sphere of Publick Action is, the less Time we can allow ourselves to spend in these Religious Exercises; but still Some of it is due to them, nor can any Secular Cares, or Avocations whatsoever, wholly excuse us from paying it. Our Blessed Lord, we are sure, had very great Business to transact with  
 Man-

Mankind, and a very short Time in which see R. M.  
 to finish it; and yet, during his Three x.  
 Years Conversation on Earth, we find   
 him often exchanging the Duties of the  
 Active and Publick State, for those of the  
 Solitary and Private; *sending the Multi-*  
*tudes away, and going up into the Moun-*  
*tain, apart, to Pray.* And we are sure,  
 that in This, as well as Other Respects,  
*he left us an Example, that we should fol-* 2 Pet. ii.  
*low his Steps.* 21.

*To Him, together with the Father and  
 the Blessed Spirit, Three Persons, and  
 One God, be ascrib'd all Majesty,  
 Dominion and Power, now and for  
 evermore. Amen.*

F I N I S.